

(4)

## BILAL IBN RABAAH

### Sneering at Horror!

Whenever Umar Ibn Al khattaab mentioned Abu Bakr he would say, "Abu Bakr is our master and the emancipator of our master." That is to say, Bilal.

Indeed, the man to whom `Umar would give the agnomen "Our Master" must be a great and fortunate man. However, this man - who was very dark in complexion, slender, very tall, thick-haired and with a sparse beard, as described by the narrators - would hardly hear words of praise and commendation directed at him and bestowed bountifully upon him without bending his head, lowering his eyelids and saying with tears flowing down his two cheeks, "Indeed, I am an Abyssinian. Yesterday, I was only a slave!"

So who is this Abyssinian who was yesterday only a slave? He is Bilal Ibn Rabaah the announcer of the time of Muslim prayer and the troublemaker to the idols. He was one of the miracles of faith and truthfulness, one of Islam's great miracles. For out of every ten Muslims, from the beginning of Islam until today and until Allah wills, we will meet seven, at least, who know Bilal. That is, there are hundreds of millions of people throughout the centuries and generations who know Bilal, remember his name, and know his role just as they know the two greatest Caliphs in Islam, Abu Bakr and `Umar!

Even if you ask a child who is still in his first years of primary school in Egypt, Pakistan, Malaysia, or China, in the two Americas, Europe, or Russia, in Iraq, Syria, Turkey, Iran, or Sudan, in Tunis, Algeria, or Morocco, in the depth of Africa and in the mountains of Asia, in every place on the earth where Muslims reside, you can ask any Muslim child, "Who is Bilal, child?" He will answer you, "He was the muezzin of the Messenger (PBUH) and he was the slave whose master used to torture him with hot burning stones to make him apostatize. But instead he said, "One, One."

Whenever you consider this enduring fame that Islam bestowed upon Bilal, you should know that before Islam this Bilal was no more than a slave who tended herds of camels for his master for a handful of dates. Had it not been for Islam, it would have been his fate to remain a slave, wandering among the crowd until death brought an end to his life and caused him to perish in the profoundest depths of forgetfulness.

However, his faith proved to be true, and the magnificence of the religion which he believed in gave him, during his lifetime and in history, an elevated place among the great and holy men of Islam. Indeed, many human beings of distinction, prestige, or wealth have not obtained even one-tenth of the immortality which Bilal the Abyssinian slave gained. Indeed, many historical figures were not conferred even a portion of the fame which has been bestowed upon Bilal.

Indeed, the black color of his complexion, his modest lineage, and his contemptible position among people as a slave did not deprive him, when he chose to embrace Islam, of occupying the high place which his truthfulness, certainty, purity, and self-sacrifice qualified him for. For him, all this would not have been on the scale of estimation and honor except as an astonishing occurrence when greatness is found where it could not possibly be.

People thought that a slave like Bilal - who descended from strange roots, who had neither kinfolk nor power, who did not possess any control over his life but was himself a possession of his master who had bought him with his money, who came and went amid the sheep, camels, and other livestock of his master - they thought that such a human creature would neither have power over anything, nor become anything. But he went beyond all expectations and possessed great faith that no one like him could

possess! He was the first muezzin of the Messenger and of Islam, a position which was aspired to by all the masters and nobles of the Quraish who embraced Islam and followed the Messenger. Yes, Bilaal Ibn Rabaah.

Oh what valor and greatness are expressed by these three words Bilaal Ibn Rabaah!

He was an Abyssinian from the black race. His destiny made him a slave of some people of the tribe of Jumah in Makkah, where his mother was one of their slave girls. He led the life of a slave whose bleak days were alike and who had no right over his day and no hope for his tomorrow.

The news of Muhammad's (PBUH) call began and reached his ears when people in Makkah began to talk about it and when he began listening to the discussions of his master and his guests, especially Umayyah Ibn khalaf, one of the elders of the Bani Jumah, of which Bilaal was one of the slaves. How often did he hear Urnayah talking to his friends for some time and to some persons of his tribe. Many times they talked about the Messenger with words that were overflowing with anxiety, rage, and malice!

Bilaal, on the other hand, was receiving between those words of insane fury and rage the attributes of this new religion. He began to feel that they were new qualities for the environment which he lived in. He was also able to receive during their threatening, thunderous talks their acknowledgement of Muhammad's nobility, truthfulness, and loyalty. Yes indeed, he heard them wondering and amazed at what Muhammad came with. They said to one another, "Muhammad was never a liar, magician, or mad, but we have to describe him this way until we turn away from him those who rush to his religion."

He heard them talking about his honesty and loyalty, about his manliness and nobility, and about his purity and composure of his intelligence. He heard them whispering about the reasons which caused them to challenge and antagonize him: First, their allegiance to the religion of their fathers; Second, their fear over the glory of the Quraish which was bestowed upon them because of their religious status as a center of idol worship and resort in the whole of the Arabian Peninsula; Third, the envy of the tribe of Bani Haashim that anyone from them should claim to be a prophet or messenger.

One day Bilaal Ibn Rabaah recognized the light of Allah and heard His resonance in the depths of his good soul. So he went to the Messenger of Allah and converted to Islam. It did not take long before the news of his embracing Islam was spread. It was a shock to the chiefs of the Bani Jumah, who were very proud and conceited. The devils of the earth sat couched over the breast of Umayyah Ibn khalaf, who considered the acceptance of Islam by one of their slaves a blow that overwhelmed them with shame and disgrace.

Their Abyssinian slave converted to Islam and followed Muhammad. Umayyah said to himself, "It does not matter. Indeed the sun this day shall not set but with the Islam of this stray slave." However, the sun never did set with the Islam of Bilaal, but it set one day with all the idols of the Quraish and the patrons of paganism among them.

As for Bilaal, he adopted an attitude that would honor not only Islam, even though Islam was more worthy of it, but also all humanity. He resisted the harshest kind of torture like all pious great men. Allah made him an example of the fact that blackness of skin and bondage would not decry the greatness of the soul if it found its faith, adhered to its Creator, and clung to its right.

Bilaal gave a profound lesson to those of his age and every age, for those of his religion and every religion, a lesson which embraced the idea that freedom and supremacy of conscience could not be bartered either for gold or punishment, even if it filled the earth. He was stripped naked and laid on hot coals to make him renounce his religion, but he refused.

The Messenger (PBUH) and Islam made this weak Abyssinian slave a teacher to all humanity in the art of respecting conscience and defending its freedom and supremacy. They used to take him out in the midday heat when the desert turned to a fatal hell. Then they would throw him naked on its scorching rocks and bring a burning hot rock, which took several men to lift from its place, and throw it onto his

body and chest. This savage torture was repeated every day until the hearts of some of his executioners took pity on him. Finally, they agreed to set him free on condition that he would speak well of their gods, even with only one word that would allow them to keep their pride so that the Quraish would not say they had been defeated and humiliated by the resistance of their persevering slave.

But even this one word, which he could eject from outside his heart and with it buy his life and soul without losing his faith or abandoning his conviction, Bilaal refused to say. Yes, he refused to say it and began to repeat his lasting chant Instead: "One... One!" His torturers shouted at him, imploring him, "Mention the name of Al-Laah and Al-'Uzzaa." But he answered, "One . . . One" They said to him, "Say as we say." But he answered them with remarkable mockery and caustic irony, "Indeed my tongue is not good at that."

So Bilaal remained in the melting heat and under the weight of the heavy rock, and by sunset they raised him up and put a rope around his neck. Then they ordered their boys to take him around the mountains and streets of Makkah. And Bilaal's tongue did not mention anything other than his holy chant, "One... One."

When the night overtook them, they began bargaining with him, "Tomorrow, speak well of our gods, say, 'My lord is Al-Laah and Al-'Uzzaa,' and we'll leave you alone. We are tired of torturing you as if we are the tortured ones." But he shook his head and said, "One... One." So, Umayyah Ibn Khalaf kicked him and exploded with exasperating fury, and shouted, "What bad luck has thrown you upon us, O slave of evil? By Al-Laah and Al-'Uzzaa, I'll make you an example for slaves and masters." But Bilaal answered with the holy greatness and certainty of a believer, "One... One."

And he who was assigned to play the role of a sympathizer returned to talking and bargaining. He said "Take it easy, Umayyah. By Al-Laah, he will not be tortured again. Indeed Bilaal is one of us, his mother is our slave girl He will not be pleased to talk about and ridicule us because of his Islam." But Bilaal gazed at their lying cunning faces, and his mouth slackened like the light of dawn. He said with calmness that shook them violently, "One... One."

It was the next day and midday approached. Bilaal was taken to the sun-baked ground. He was patient, brave, firm, and expecting the reward in the Hereafter.

Abu Bakr As-siddiq went to them while they were torturing him and shouted at them, "Are you killing a man because he says, 'Allah is my Lord?'" Then he shouted at Umayyah Ibn Khalaf, "Take more than his price and set him free." It was as if Umayyah were drowning and had caught a lifeboat. It was to his liking and he was very much pleased when he heard Abu Bakr offering the price of his freedom, since they had despaired of subjugating Bilaal. And as they were merchants, they realized that selling him was more profitable to them than his death.

They sold him to Abu-Bakr, and then he emancipated him immediately, and Bilaal took his place among free men. When As-siddiq put his arm round Bilaal, rushing with him to freedom, Umayyah said to him, "Take him, for by Al-Laah and Al-'Uzzaa if you had refused to buy him except for one ounce of gold, I would have sold him to you." Abu Bakr realized the bitterness of despair and disappointment hidden in these words. It was appropriate not to answer, but because they violated the dignity of this man who had become his brother and his equal, he answered Umayyah saying, "By Allah, if you had refused to sell him except for a hundred ounces, I would have paid it." He departed with his companion to the Messenger of Allah, giving him news of his liberation, and there was a great celebration.

After the Hijrah of the Messenger (PBUH) and the Muslims to Al-Madinah and their settling there, the Messenger instituted the Adhaan. So who would become the muezzin five times a day? Who would call across distant lands, "Allah is the Greatest" and "There is no god but Allah"?

It was Bilaal, who had shouted thirteen years before while the torture was destroying him, "Allah is One... One." He was chosen by the Messenger that day to be the first muezzin in Islam. With his melodious soul-stirring voice, he filled the hearts with faith and the ears with awe when he called:

Allah is the Greatest, Allah is the Greatest

Allah is the Greatest, Allah is the Greatest

I bear witness that there is no god but Allah

I bear witness that there is no god but Allah

I bear witness that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah

I bear witness that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah

Come to Prayer

Come to Prayer

Come to Success

Come to Success

Allah is the Greatest, Allah is the Greatest

There is no god but Allah

Fighting broke out between the Muslims and the army of the Quraish who came to invade Al-Madiinah. The war raged fiercely and terribly while Bilaal was there attacking and moving about in the first battle. Islam was plunged into the Battle of Badr, whose motto the Messenger (PBUH) ordered to be, "One... One."

In this battle, the Quraish sacrificed their youth and all their noblemen to their destruction. Umayyah Ibn khalaf, who had been Bilaal's master and who used to torture him with deadly brutality, was about to retreat from fighting. But his friend Uqbah Ibn Abu Mu'iit went to him when he heard the news of his withdrawal, carrying a censer in his right hand. When he arrived he was sitting among his people. He threw the censer between his hands and said to him, "O Abu `Ally, use this. You are one of the women." But Umayyah shouted at him saying, "May Allah make you and what you came with ugly!" And he did not find a way out, so he went out to fight.

What other secrets does destiny conceal and unfold? `Uqbah Ibn Abu Mu'iit had been the greatest supporter of Umayyah in the torture of Bilaal and other weak Muslims. And on that day, he himself was the one who urged him to go to the Battle of Badr where he would die, just as it would be the place where Uqbah would die! Umayyah had been one of the shirkers from war. Had it not been for what Uqbah did to him, he would not have gone out fighting.

But Allah executes His command. So let Umayyah go out, because there was an old account between him and one of the slaves of Allah. It was time to settle it. The Judge never dies. As you owe, you shall be owed to.

Indeed destiny would be very much pleased to mock the tyrants. Uqbah, whose provocations Umayyah used to listen to and follow his desire to torture the innocent believers, was the same person who would lead Umayyah to his death. By the hand of whom? By the hand of Bilaal himself and Bilaal alone! The same hands that Umayyah used to chain and whose owner he beat and tortured. Those very hands were on that day, in the Battle of Badr, on a rendezvous that destiny had set the best time for, with the torture of the Quraish who had humiliated the believers unjustly and aggressively. That is what really happened.

When the fighting began between the two sides, and the side of the Muslims shouted the motto, "One . . . One," the heart of Umayyah was startled, and a warning came to him. The word which his slave used to repeat yesterday under torture and horror became today the motto of a whole religion and of a whole new nation.

"One . . . One" Is it so? With this quickness? And with this rapid growth?

The swords clashed in the battle and the fighting became severe. As the battle neared its end, Umayyah Ibn Khalaf noticed `Abd Ar Rahman Ibn `Awf, the Companion of the Messenger of Allah. He sought refuge with him and asked to be his captive, hoping to save his life. `Abd Ar-Rahman accepted his supplication and granted him refuge. Then he took him and walked with him amidst the battle to the place where captives were held.

On the way Bilaal noticed him and shouted, "The head of kuft (disbelief), Umayyah Ibn Khalaf! May I not be saved if he is saved!" he lifted up his sword to cut off the head which was all the time full of pride and arrogance. But `Abd Ar-Rahman Ibn `Awf shouted at him, "O Bilaal, he is my captive!" A captive while the war was still raging? A captive while his sword was still dripping blood because of what he had been doing just moments before to the bodies of the Muslims? No! In Bilaal's opinion, this was irony and abuse of the mind, and Umayyah had scoffed and abused the mind enough. He scoffed until there was no irony remaining for such a day, such a dilemma, and such a fate!

Bilaal realized that he would not be able alone to storm the sanctuary of his brother in faith, `Abd Ar-rahman Ibn `Awf. So he shouted at the top of his voice to the Muslims, "O helpers of Allah! The head of Kufr, Umayyah Ibn khalaf! May I not be saved if he is saved!" A band of Muslims approached with swords dripping blood. They surrounded Umayyah and his son, who was fighting with the Quraish. `Abd Ar-Rabman Ibn `Awf could not do anything. He could not even protect his armor which the crowd removed. Bilaal gazed long at the body of Umayyah, who fell beneath the smashing swords. Then he hastened away from him shouting, "One... One."

I do not think it is our right to examine the virtue of leniency in Bilaal on this occasion. If the meeting between Bilaal and Umayyah had taken place in other circumstances, we would have been allowed to ask Bilaal for leniency, and a man like him in faith and piety would not have withheld it. But the meeting which took place between them was in a war, where each party came to destroy its enemy.

The swords were blazing, the killed were failing. Then Bilaal saw Umayyah, who had not left even a small place on his body free of the traces of his torture. Where and how did he see him? He saw him in the arena of battle and fighting, mowing down with his sword all of the heads of Muslims he could. If he had reached the head of Bilaal then, he would have cut it off. In such circumstances as the two men met, it is not fair to ask Bilaal: Why did you not forgive him gently?

The days went by and Makkah was conquered. The Messenger (PBUH) entered it, thankful and saying, "Allah is the Greatest," at the head of 10,000 Muslims. He headed for the Ka`bah immediately, this holy place which the Quraish had crowded with idols amounting to the number of days of the year. "The truth has come and falsehood has vanished."

Ever since that day, there has been no Uzzaa, no Laat and no Hubal. Man will not bow to a rock or idol after today. People will worship no one with all his conscience but Allah, Who has no likeness, the One, Most Great, Most High. The Messenger entered the Ka`bah accompanied by Bilaal. He had hardly entered it when he faced a carved idol representing Ibraahiim (Abraham) (PBUH) prophesying with sticks.

The Messenger (PBUH) was angry and said, "May Allah kill them. Our ancestor never did prophesy with sticks. Ibraahiim was not a Jew or Christian, but he was a true Muslim and was never a polytheist." Then he ordered Bilaal to ascend to the top of the mosque and call to Prayer, and Bilaal called the Adhaan. How magnificent `was the time, place, and occasion!

Life came to a standstill in Makkah, and thousands of Muslims stood like motionless air, repeating in submissiveness and whispering the words of the Adhaan after Bilaal while the polytheists were in their homes hardly believing what was happening.

Is this Muhammad (PBUH) and his poor followers who were expelled yesterday from their homes? Is this really he, with 10,000 of his believers? Is this really he whom we chased away, fought and killed his most beloved kin and relations? Is this really he who was speaking to us a few minutes ago while our necks were at his mercy, saying, "Go, you are free!"?

But three nobles of the Quraish were sitting in the open space in front of the Kabah, as if they were touched by the scene of Bilaal treading their idols with his feet and sending above its heaped wreckage his voice with the Adhaan, spreading to all the horizons of Makah, like a passing spring. These three were Abu Sufyaan Ibn Harb, who had embraced Islam only hours ago, and `Attaab Ibn Usaid and Al-haarith Ibn Hishaam, who had not yet embraced Islam.

`Attaab, with his eyes on Bilaal crying out the Adhaan, said, "Allah has honored Usaid in that he did not hear this, or else he would have heard what would infuriate him." Al-haarith said, "By Allah, if I were sure that Muhammad (PBUH) is telling the truth, I would follow him." Abu Sufyaan, the old fox, commented on their speech saying, "I am not saying a word, for if I do, these pebbles will inform about me."

When the Prophet left the Ka'bah he saw them, read their faces instantly, and said with his eyes shining with the light of Allah and the joy of victory, "I know what you've said," and he told them what they had said.

Al-Haarith and Attaab shouted, `We bear witness that you are the Messenger of Allah. By Allah, no one heard us, so we can't say somebody informed you!"

And they welcomed Bilaal with new hearts, which enclosed the echo of the words which they had heard in the Messenger's speech just after he entered Makkah. "O people of the Quraish, Allah has removed from you the arrogance of pre-Islamic paganism, and its boasting about forefathers. People are descended from Adam, and Adam was from dust."

Bilaal lived with the Messenger of Allah (PBUH), witnessing all the battles with him, calling to Prayer and observing the rites of this great religion that took him out of darkness to light and from servitude to freedom. The stature of Islam along with the stature of Muslims was elevated. Every day Bilaal was getting closer to the heart of the Messenger of Allah, who used to describe him as "one of the inhabitants of Paradise."

But Bilaal remained just as he was, noble and humble, always considering himself "the Abyssinian who only yesterday was a slave." One day he was proposing to two girls for himself and his brother, so he said to their father, "I am Bilaal and this is my brother, two slaves from Abyssinia. We were astray and Allah guided us. We were two slaves and Allah emancipated us. If you agree on us marrying your daughters, all praise is to Allah; if you refuse, then Allah is the Greatest."

The Messenger passed away to Allah, well pleased and well pleasing, and Abu Bakr As-siddiiq took the command of the Muslims after him. Bilaal went to the caliph (successor) of the Messenger of Allah and said to him, "O Caliph of the Messenger of Allah, I heard the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) say, "The best deed of a believer is jihaad in the cause of Allah."

Abu Bakr said to him, "So what do you want, Bilaal?" He said, "I want to defend in the cause of Allah until I die." Abu Bakr said, "And who will call the Adhaan for us?" Bilaal said, with his eyes overflowing with tears, "I will not call the Adhaan for anyone after the Messenger of Allah." Abu Bakr said, "Stay and call to Prayer for us, Bilaal." Bilaal said, "If you emancipated me to be for you, I will do what you want, but if you emancipated me for Allah, leave me to Whom I was emancipated for." Abu Bakr said, "I emancipated you for Allah, Bilaal."

The narrators differ. Some of them believe that he traveled and remained fighting and defending. Some others narrate that he accepted Abu Bakr's request to stay with him in Madiinah. When Abu Bakr died and Umar succeeded him, Bilaal asked his permission and went to Syria.

Anyhow, Bilaal vowed the remaining part of his life to fight in the cause of Islam, determined to meet Allah and His Messenger having done the best deed they love.

His melodious, welcoming, awe-inspiring voice did not call the Adhaan any more, because whenever he uttered in his Adhaan, "I bear witness that Muhammad (PBUH) is the Messenger of Allah," memories would stir him, and his voice would vanish under his sadness while the tears cried out the words.

His last Adhaan was during the days Umar, the Commander of the Faithful, when he visited Syria. The Muslims entreated him to persuade Bilaal to call one Adhaan for them. The Commander of the Faithful called Bilaal when it was time for Prayer and pleaded with him to make the Adhaan. Bilaal ascended and did so. The Companions of the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) who were with the Commander of the Faithful while Bilaal was calling the Adhaan wept as they never did before, and Umar the most strongly.

Bilaal died in Syria, fighting in the cause of Allah just as he had wanted. Beneath the dust of Damascus, today therlies the body of one of the greatest men of humankind in standing up for the creed of Islam with conviction.

## ZAID IBN HAARITHAH

## The Beloved

In the Battle of Mu'tah, the Prophet (PBUH) stood to pay his farewell to the departing Muslim army on its way to fight the Romans and to announce the name of the three successive commanders of the army: "Zaid Ibn Haarithah is your first commander, but in case he is wounded, Ja'far Ibn Abi Taalib will take over the command, and if the latter is wounded then `Abd Allah Ibn Rawaahah will replace him." But who was Zaid Ibn Haarithah. Who was the beloved one of the Prophet (PBUH)?

Narrators and historians described his appearance as short, dark swarthy, and snub-nosed. As for his reality, he was truly a great Muslim.

If we go back in time, we will see Haarithah, Zaid's father, just putting the luggage on the camel that was to carry his wife, Su`dah, to her family. Haarithah paid his farewell to his wife who carried Zaid - at that time a young child - in her arms. But every time he was about to leave his wife and child who were going with a caravan, to return to his house and work, he was driven by a mysterious and inexplicable urge to keep his wife and son in sight; yet it was time for them to set out on their way and Haarithah had to pay his last farewell to his wife and head back home. His tears flowed as he said goodbye and stood as if pinned to the ground until he lost sight of them. At that moment he felt broken-hearted.

Su'dah stayed with her family for a while. One day, suddenly her neighborhood was attacked by one of its opposing tribes. Taken by surprise, Bani Ma`n were defeated and Zai Ibn Haarithah was captured along with other war prisoners. His mother returned home alone. When Haarithah heard the sad news, he was thunderstruck. He traveled everywhere and asked everyone about his beloved Zaid. He recited these lines of poetry on the spur of the moment to lament the loss of his son:

My heart was broken when I lost Zaid. I don't know if he is alive or dead or if I will ever see him again. By Allah, I still do not know if he was killed on the plain or slain on the mountain. His picture comes to the mind's eye whenever the sun rises or sets. Even when the wind blows, it brings along his memory. Alas, I am shrouded by my sadness, grief, and fear for him.

At that time, slavery was a recognized and established social fact that turned into a necessity. This was the case in Athens, which had long enjoyed a flourishing civilization, in Rome, and in the entire ancient world, including the Arab Peninsula. When the opposing tribe attacked the Bani Ma'n, it headed to the market of `Ukaadh, held at that time, to sell its prisoners of war. The child Zaid, was sold to Hakiim Ibn Huzaam, who gave him to his aunt Khadijah as a gift. At that time, khadijah was married to Muhammad Ibn `Abd Allah but the revelation had not yet descended on him. However, he enjoyed all the promising great qualities of prophets (PBUH). Khadijah, on her part, gave her servant Zaid as a gift to her husband, Allah's Prophet. He was very pleased with Zaid and manumitted him at once. His great and compassionate heart overflowed with care and love towards the boy.

Later on, during one of the Hajj seasons, a group of Haarithah's tribe ran into Zaid in Makkah and told him about his parents anguish and grief ever since they had lost him. Zaid asked them to convey his love and longing to his parents. He told them, "Tell my father that I live here with the most generous and loving father." No sooner did his father know his son's whereabouts than he hastened on his way to him, accompanied by his brother.

As soon as they reached Makkah, he asked about the trustworthy Muhammad. When he met him, he said, "O son of Ibn Abd Al-Muttalib! O son of the master of his tribe! Your land is one of security and sanctuary and you are famous for helping the distressed and sheltering the captive. We have come here to ask you to give us back our son. So please confer a favor on us and set a reasonable ransom for him." The Prophet knew the great love and attachment Zaid carried in his heart for him, yet at the same time, he respected Haarithah's parental right. Therefore, he told Haarithah, "Ask Zaid to come here and make

him choose between you and me. If he chooses you, he is free to go with you, but if he chooses me then, by Allah, I will not leave him for anything in the world." Haarithah's face brightened, for he did not expect such magnanimity; therefore, he said, "You are far more generous than us." Then the Prophet (PBUH) summoned Zaid. When he came he asked him, "Do you recognize these people?" Zaid said, "Yes, this is my father and this is my uncle."

The Prophet (PBUH) told him what he had told Haarithah. Zaid replied, "I will not choose anyone but you, for you are a father and an uncle to me." The Prophet's eyes were full of thankful and compassionate tears. He held Zaid's hand and walked to the Ka'bah, where the Quraish were holding a meeting, and cried out, "I bear witness that Zaid is my son, and in case I die first, he will inherit from me, and in case he dies first, I will inherit from him." Haarithah was overjoyed, for not only had his son been manumitted but he had also become the son of the man who was known by the Quraish as "The Honest and Trustworthy". Moreover, he was a descendant of Bani Haashim and was raised to a high station among his people.

Zaid's father and uncle returned back home leaving their son safe and sound after he had become master of himself and after the Prophet (PBUH) had set to rest their fears concerning his fate.

The Prophet (PBUH) adopted Zaid and from that moment on he was known as Zaid Ibn Muhammad.

Suddenly, on a bright morning whose brightness has never been seen before or since, the revelation descended on Muhammad: "read! In the name of your Lord who created - created mankind from something which clings; read! And your Lord is the Most Noble; who taught by the pen; taught mankind what he did not know " (96:1-5). Then the revelation continued: "O you encovered--- Arise and warn! And magnify your Lord" (74:1-3). "O Messenger! Proclaim the message which has been sent down to you from your Lord. And if you do not, then you have not conveyed His message. Allah will protect you from mankind. Verily, Allah guides not the people who disbelieve" (5 : 61).

As soon as the Prophet (PBUH) had shouldered the responsibility of his message, Zaid submitted himself to Islam. Narrators said that he was the second man and more probably the first man to embrace Al-Islam.

The Prophet (PBUH) loved Zaid so dearly due to his singular loyalty, greatness of spirit, conscientiousness, honesty, and trust worthiness. All this and more, made Zaid Ibn Haarithah or Zaid the Beloved One, as the Companions used to call him, hold a distinguished place in the Prophet's heart (PBUH). `Aa'ishah (May Allah be pleased with her) said, "The Prophet (PBUH) never sent Zaid on an expedition but as a commander and if his life had not been so short, he would have made him his successor.

Was it possible for anyone to be held in such great esteem by the Prophet? What was Zaid really like?

As we have mentioned, he was that boy who had been kidnapped, sold, and manumitted by the Prophet (PBUH). He was this short, swarthy, snub-nosed man. Above all, he had a compassionate heart and a free soul. Therefore, he was raised to the highest position by his Islam and the Prophet's love for him, for neither Islam nor the Prophet (PBUH) took notice of descent or prestige. Muslims like Bilaal , Suhaib, Khabbaab, `Ammaar, Usaamah and Zaid were all alike according to this great religion. Each one of them played an important and distinctive role in giving impetus to the rapidly spreading religion. These saintly ones and commanders were the sparkling stars of Islam. Islam rectified life values when the glorious Qur'aan said: "Surely, the most honorable among you in the sight of Allah are the most pious of you " (49:13). Moreover, it encouraged all promising talents and all pure, trustworthy, and productive potentialities.

The Prophet (PBUH) married his cousin Zainab to Zaid. It seems that Zainab (May Allah be pleased with her) accepted that marriage because her shyness prevented her from turning down the Prophet's intercession. Unfortunately, the gap between them widened every day, and finally their marriage collapsed. The Prophet (PBUH) felt that he was, in a way, responsible for this marriage which ended up in divorce; therefore, he married his cousin and chose a new wife, Umm Kulthum Bent `Uqbah for Zaid. The slanderers and the enemies of the Prophet spread doubt concerning the legality of Muhammad's marriage to his son's ex-wife. The Qur'aan refuted their claims by striking a distinction between sons and adopted sons. It abrogated adoption altogether saying: "Mohammed is not a father of any man among you, but he is the Messenger of Allah and the last of the Prophets " (33:90). Hence, Zaid was called after his father's name once again, namely, Zaid Ibn Haarithah.

Now, do you see the Muslim troops that marched towards the Battle of Al-Jumuuh? Their commander was Zaid Ibn Haarithah. Do you see those Muslims troops that marched to At- Tarf, Al-Iis and Hismii and other battles? The commander of all those battles was Zaid Ibn Haarithah. Truly, as Aa'ishah (May Allah be pleased with her) said, 'The Prophet never sent Zaid on an expedition but as a commander.

At last, the Battle of Mu'tah took place. It seems that the Romans and their senescent empire were filled with apprehensions and forebodings about the rapid spread of Islam. They saw it as a genuine and fatal threat to their very existence, especially in Syria, which bordered the center of the new, sweeping religion. Therefore, they used Syria as a springboard to the Arab Peninsula and the Muslim nation.

The Prophet (PBUH) realized that the aim of the Roman skirmishes was to test the Muslim combat readiness. Therefore, he decided to take the initiative and exhibit in action Islam's determination to resist and to gain ultimate victory. On 1 Jumaadii A.H. 8, the Muslim army marched towards Al-Balqaa' in Syria until they reached its borders where Heraclius's armies of the Romans and Arabicized tribes residing at the borders were. The Roman army pitched camp at a place called Mashaarif, whereas the Muslim army pitched camp near a town called Mu'tah. Hence, the battle was named Mu'tah.

The Prophet (PBUH) knew how important and crucial this battle was; therefore he chose for its command three of those who were worshippers by night and fighters by day. Those three fighters sold their lives and property to Allah and renounced their needs and desires for the sake of great martyrdom which would pave their way to win Allah's pleasure and to see Allah, the Generous. These three commanders were in succession: Zaid Ibn Haarithah, Ja'far Ibn Abi Taalib and Abd Allah Ibn Rawaahah. (May Allah be pleased with them and they with Him, and may Allah be pleased with all the Companions.) Thus, the Prophet (PBUH) stood to bid farewell to his army and gave them his order saying, "Zaid Ibn Haarithah is your first commander, but in case he is wounded, Ja'far Ibn Abi Taalib will take over the command, and if he is also wounded, `Abd Allah Ibn Rawaahah will take it over. Although Ja'far Ibn Abi Taalib was one of the Prophet's closest friends who had valor, fearlessness, and good lineage, yet the Prophet chose him as the second commander after Zaid. Thus, the Prophet (PBUH) stressed the fact that the new religion of Islam came to abolish corrupt human relationships based on false and superficial discrimination. It established new, rational human relationships instead.

It was as if the Prophet foresaw the proceedings of the imminent battle, for he assigned the command of the army to Zaid, Ja'far, and then `Abd Allah and strangely enough, all of them were raised to Allah in the same order set by him. When the Muslims saw the vanguard of the Roman army, which they had estimated at 200,000 warriors, they were stunned by its enormity that surpassed all expectation. But since when did the battles of faith depend on number? At that moment, the Muslims flung themselves into the battlefield regardless of the consequences or jeopardy. Their commander, Zaid, carried the Prophet's standard and fought his way through the enemy's spears, arrows, and swords. He was not so much searching for victory as for concluding his deal with Allah, Who has purchased the lives and properties of Muslims in exchange for Paradise.

Zaid saw neither the sand of Al-Balqaa' nor the Roman forces. The only things that he saw were the hills of Paradise and its green cushions. These images flickered through his mind like the fluttering flags that had announced his wedding day. When he thrust and struck, he not only smote at the necks of his

enemies, but also flung the doors open that stood in his way to the vast door through which he would reach the home of peace, the eternal Paradise and Allah's company. Zaid clung to his destiny. His spirit, on its way up to heaven, was overjoyed as it took its last glance at the body of its master that was not covered with soft silk but rather with pure blood shed in the way of Allah. His serene smile widened when he saw the second commander, Ja'far, dart towards the standard and hold it high before it touched the ground.

## KHAALID IBN AL-WALID

## A Sleepless Man Who Will Not Let Anyone Sleep

His story is a rather perplexing one. He was the deadly enemy of Muslims in the Battle of Uhud and the deadly enemy of the enemies of Islam in the remaining Muslim battles.

I feel at a loss concerning where to begin and what to begin with. He himself hardly believed that his life had really begun until that day on which he shook hands with the Prophet as a sign of his allegiance to him. If he could have ruled out all the years, even the days that preceded that day, he would not have thought twice.

Let us then begin with that part of his life which he himself loved most. Let us begin from that glorious moment when his heart was affected by Allah and his spirit was blessed by the Most Merciful. Thus, it overflowed with devotion to His religion, His Prophet and to a memorable martyrdom in the way of the truth. This martyrdom enabled him to erase the burdens of his advocacy of falsehood in the past.

One day, he sat alone in deep thought concerning that new religion that was gaining momentum and gaining ground every day. He wished that Allah, the All-Knower of what is hidden and unseen, would guide him to the right path. His blessed heart was revived by the glad tidings of certainty. Therefore, he said to himself, "By Allah, it is crystal clear now. This man is indeed a Prophet, so how long shall I procrastinate. By Allah, I will go and submit myself to Islam."

Now, let us hear him (May Allah be pleased with him) narrate his blessed visit to the Prophet (PBUH) and his journey from Makkah to Al-Madiinah to join the ranks of the believers: I hoped to find an escort, and I ran into `Uthmaan Ibn Talhah and when I told him about my intention, he agreed to escort me. We traveled shortly before daybreak and as we reached the plain, we ran into `Amr Ibn Al-'Aas.

After we had exchanged greetings, he asked us about our destination, and when we told him, it turned out that he himself was going to the same place to submit himself to Islam. The three of us arrived at Al-Madiinah on the first day of Safar in the eighth year. As soon as I laid my eyes on the Prophet, I said, "Peace be upon the Prophet," so he greeted me with a bright face. Immediately, I submitted myself to Islam and bore witness to the truth. Finally, the Prophet (PBUH) said, "I knew that you have an open mind and I prayed that it would lead you to safety." I took my oath of allegiance to the Prophet then asked him, "Please ask Allah's forgiveness for me for all the wrongdoings I have committed to hinder men from the path of Allah." The Prophet said, "Islam erases all the wrongdoings committed before it." Yet I pleaded with him, "Please pray for me. Finally, he supplicated Allah, "O Allah, forgive Khaalid for all the wrongdoings he committed before he embraced Islam." Then `Amr Ibn Al-'Aas and `Uthmaan Ibn Talhah stepped forward and submitted themselves to Islam and gave their oath of allegiance to the Prophet.

Notice these words "Please ask Allah's forgiveness for me for all the wrongdoings I have committed in the past to hinder men from the path of Allah." Now, whoever has the perception and insight to read between the lines will find the true meaning of these words of Khaalid, who became the sword of Allah and the hero of Islam. When we come across various incidents in the course of his life story, these words are our key to understanding and elucidation.

For the time being, let us accompany Khaalid, who had just embraced Islam, and watch the Quraish's great warrior who had always had the reins of leadership. Let us see the subtlety of Arabs in the art of attack and retreat as he turned his back on the idols of his ancestors and the glory of his people and welcomed, along with the Prophet and the Muslims, the advent of a new world that Allah had destined to rise under the standard of Muhammad and the slogan of monotheism.

Let us hear the Muslim Khaalid's impressive story. To start with, do you recall the story of the three martyrs of the Battle of Mu'tah? They were Zaid Ibn Haarithah, Ja'far Ibn Abi Taalib and `Abd Allah Ibn Rawaahah. They were the heroes of the Battle of Mu'tah in Syria, in which the Romans mobilized 200,000 warriors. Nevertheless, the Muslims achieved unprecedented victory.

Do you recall the glorious, sad words with which the Prophet announced the sad news of the death of the three commanders of the battle? "Zaid Ibn Haarithah took the standard and fought holding it until he died as a martyr; then Ja'far took it and fought clinging to it until he won martyrdom; and finally, `Abd Allah Ibn Rawaahah gripped it and held it fast until he won martyrdom."

This is only part of the Prophet's speech, which I have written before, but now I find it appropriate to write the rest of the story: "Then it was gripped by a sword of the swords of Allah and he fought until he achieved victory."

"Who was that hero? He was Khaalid Ibn Al-Waliid, who threw himself into the battlefield as if he were an ordinary soldier under the three commanders whom the Prophet assigned. The first commander was Zaid Ibn Haarithah, the second was Ja'far Ibn Abi Taalib, and the third was `Abd Allah Ibn Rawaahah. They won martyrdom in the same order on the vicious battlefield.

After the last commander had won martyrdom, Thaabit Ibn Aqram took the standard with his right hand and raised it high amidst the Muslim army. His purpose was to stop any potential disarray inside the lines. Thaabit then carried the standard and hastened towards Khaalid Ibn Al-Waliid and said, "Take the standard, Abu Sulaimaan." Khaalid thought that he did not deserve to take it since he had newly embraced Islam. He had no right to preside over an army that included the Ansaar and Muhaajiruun who had preceded him in embracing Islam.

These qualities of decorum, modesty, and gratitude were becoming of Khaalid's worthiness. He said, "I will not dare to hold it. Go on, hold it, for you deserve it better than me. First, you are older. Second, you witnessed the Battle of Bad." Thaabit answered, "Come on, take it, you know the art of fighting far better than me. By Allah, I only held it to give it to you." Then he called on the Muslims, "Do you vote for Khaalid's command?" They readily answered, "Yes, we do!"

At that moment, the great warrior mounted his horse and thrust the standard forward with his right hand as if he were knocking on closed doors that had been closed for too long and whose time had finally come to be flung wide open. So this act was to lead the hero to a long but passable road on which he would leap during the Prophet's life and after his death until destiny brought his ingenuity to its inevitable end.

Although Khaalid was in charge of the army command, hardly any military expertise could change the already determined outcome of the battle, turning defeat into victory or turning victory into defeat. The only thing that a genius could manage to do was to prevent more casualties or damage in the Muslim army from occurring and end the battle with the remainder of the army intact. Sometimes a great commander must resort to that kind of preventive retreat measure that will prevent the annihilation of the rest of his striking force on the battlefield. However, such a retreat was potentially impossible, yet if the saying, "Nothing stands in the way of a fearless heart" is true, there was no one more fearless and ingenious than Khaalid.

Instantly, The Sword of Allah flung himself into the vast battlefield. His eyes were as sharp as a hawk's. His mind worked quickly, turning over all the potentialities in his mind. While the fierce fight raged, Khaalid quickly split his army into groups, with each assigned a certain task. He used his incredible expertise and outstanding craftiness to open a wide space within the Roman army through which the whole Muslim army retreated intact. This narrow escape was credited to the ingenuity of a Muslim hero. In this battle, the Prophet gave Khaalid the great epithet 'The Sword of Allah'.

Shortly thereafter, the Quraish violated their treaty with the Prophet (PBUH) and the Muslims marched under Khaalid's to conquer Makkah. The Prophet assigned the command of the right flank of the army to Khaalid Ibn Al-Wallid.

Khaalid entered Makkah as one of the commanders of the Muslim army and the Muslim nation. He recalled his youth when he galloped across its plains and mountains as one of the commanders of the army of paganism and polytheism. Khaalid stood there recollecting his childhood days playing on its wonderful pastures and his youthful memories of its wild entertainment. These memories of the past weighed down on him, and he was filled with remorse for his wasted life in which he worshipped inanimate and helpless idols. But before he bit the tips of his fingers in remorse, he was overpowered by the magnificence and spell of this scene of the glorious light that approached Makkah and swept away all that came before it. The astounding scene of the weak and oppressed people, on whose bodies the marks of torture and horror still showed, was magnificent as they returned to the land they had been unjustly driven out of. Only this time, they returned on horseback under the fluttering standard of Islam. Their whispers at Daar Al-Arqam's house yesterday turned today into loud and glorious shouts of "Allhu akbar (Allah is the Greatest)", that shook Makkah and the victorious cry "There is no god but Allah", with which the entire universe seemed to be celebrating a feast day.

How did this miracle come about? What is the explanation of what had happened? Simply, there was no logical or rational explanation whatsoever, but the power of the verse that the victorious marching soldiers repeated with their "There is no god but Allah" and "Allahu akbar" as they looked with joy at one another and said, " (It is) a Promise of Allah, and Allah fails not in His Promise" (30:6).

Then Khaalid raised his head and watched in reverence, joy and satisfaction as the standard of Islam fluttered on the horizon. He said to himself, "Indeed, it is a promise of Allah and Allah fails not in His promise." Then he bent his head in gratitude and thanks for Allah's blessing that had guided him to Islam and made him one of those who would usher Islam into Makkah rather than one of those who would be spurred by this conquest to submit themselves to Islam.

Khaalid was always near the Prophet. He devoted his excellent abilities to the service of the religion he firmly believed in and devoted his life to. After the glorious Prophet had died and Abu Bakr became the caliph, the sly and treacherous cyclone of those who apostatized from Islam shrouded the new religion with its deafening roar and devastating outbreak. Abu Bakr, quickly chose the hero of the battlefields and man of the hour, namely Abu Sulaimaan, The Sword of Allah, Khaalid Ibn Al-Waliid. It is true that Abu Bakr himself was at the head of the first army that fought against the apostates; nevertheless, he saved Khaalid for the decisive day and Khaalid was truly the mastermind and inspired hero of the last crucial battle that was considered the most dangerous of all the apostasy battles.

When the apostate armies were taking measures to perfect their large conspiracy, the great Caliph Abu Bakr insisted on taking the lead of the Muslim army. The leaders of the Companions tried desperately to persuade him not to, yet his decision was final. Perhaps he meant to give the cause for which he mobilized and rallied this army a special importance, tinged with sanctity. He could not achieve his aim except by his actual participation in the deadly battle and his direct command of some or all of the Muslim troops. It was a battle between the power of belief against the power of apostasy and darkness.

The outbreak of apostasy posed serious threats, in spite of the fact that it started as an accidental insubordination. Soon, the opportunists and the malicious enemies of Islam, whether from the Arab tribes or from across the borders where the power of Romans and Persians perched, seized their last opportunity to hinder the sweeping tide of Islam. Therefore, they instigated mutiny and chaos from behind the scenes.

Unfortunately, mutiny flowed like an electric current through the Arab tribes, like Asad, Ghatfaan, `Abs, Tii, Dhubyaaan, then Bani `Aamar, Hawaazin, Sulaim and Bani Tamiim. Hardly had the skirmishes started with limited numbers of soldiers than they were reinforced with enormous armies, often of thousands of warriors. The people of Bahrain, Oman and Al-Mahrah responded to this horrible plot.

Suddenly, Islam was facing a dangerous predicament, and the apostate enemy closed in upon the believers. But Abu Bakr was ready for them. He mobilized the Muslim armies and marched to where the armies of Bani `Abs, Bani Murah and Bani Dhubyaan gathered.

The battle started and went on for a long time before the Muslims achieved a great victory. No sooner had the victorious Muslim army reached Al-Madiinah than the caliph sent it on another expedition. News spread that the armies of the apostates were increasing in number and weapons by the hour.

Abu Bakr marched at the head of the second army, only this time, the prominent Companions lost their patience and clung to their opinion that the caliph should remain in Al-Madiinah. Accordingly, Imam `Aliy stood in Abu Bakr's way as he was marching at the head of the army and held the reins of his she camel and asked, "Where to, Caliph of the Prophet? I will tell you the same words that the Prophet told you in the Battle of Uhud: Sheathe your sword, Abu Bakr, and don't expose us to such a tragic loss at this critical time." The caliph had to comply with this consensus. Therefore, he split the army into eleven divisions and assigned a certain role for each one. Khaalid Ibn Al-waliid would be the commander over a large division. When the caliph gave every commander his standard, he addressed Khaalid saying, "I heard the Prophet say, `Khaalid is truly an excellent slave of Allah and a brother of the same tribe. He is a sword of Allah unsheathed against disbelievers and hypocrites."

Khaalid and his army fought one battle after another and achieved one victory after another until they reached the crucial battle.

It was in the Battle of Al-Yamaamah that Bani Haniifah and their allies from the Arab tribes organized one of the most dangerous armies of the apostasy, led by Musailamah the Liar. A number of Muslim forces tried to defeat Musailamah's army but failed. Finally the caliph ordered Khaalid to march to where Bani Haniifah was camped.

No sooner had Musailamah heard that Khaalid was on his way to fight him than he reorganized his army, turning it into a devastating and horrible enemy machine. Both armies met in fierce combat. When you read the history of the Prophet (PBUH) a perplexing awe will take hold of you, for you will find yourself watching a battle that resembles our modern battles in its atrocity and horrors, though it differs in weapons and tactics.

Khaalid's army stopped at a sand dune that overlooked Al Yamaamah. At the same time, Musailamah marched haughtily and with great might followed by endless waves of his soldiers. Khaalid assigned the brigades and standard to the commanders of his army. As the two armies clashed in a terrible, large-scale, devastating war, the Muslim martyrs fell one by one like roses in a garden on which a stubborn tempest blew!. Immediately Khaalid realized that the enemy was about to win the battle, so he galloped up a nearby hill and surveyed the battlefield. He realized that his soldiers morale was waning under the pressure of the blitz of Musailamah's army.

Instantly, he decided to trigger a new feeling of responsibility inside the Muslim army, so he summoned the flanks and reorganized their positions on the battlefield. He cried out victoriously, "Fight together in your own groups and let us see who will surpass the other and win the field." They all obeyed and reorganized themselves in their own groups. Thus, the Muhaajiruun fought under their standard, the Ansaar fought under theirs, and every group fought under its standard. It became fairly easy to determine where defect came from. As a result, the Muslims were charged with a enthusiasm, firmness, and determination.

Every now and then, Khaalid was careful to cry out, "Allahu akbar" and "There is no god but Allah." He ordered his army in such a way that he turned the swords of his men into an inevitable victory that no one could escape. It was striking that, in a few minutes, the Muslim army turned the tables on Musailamah's army. Musailamah's soldiers fell in tens of hundreds and thousands like flies that were suffocated by the deadly spray of a pesticide. Khaalid ordered his soldiers with a kind of enthusiasm that flowed into them like an electric current. This was a manifestation of his striking genius. This was the

manner in which the most decisive and fierce battle of apostasy was conducted. In the end, Musailamah was slain and the bodies of his men were scattered on the battlefield. Finally, the standard of the liar imposter was buried forever.

On hearing the good news, the caliph offered the Prayer of Thanksgiving to Allah the Great and Most High for bestowing victory on the hands of this hero.

Abu Bakr had enough discernment and insight to realize the danger of the evil powers that perched on the borders, threatening the promising future of Islam and Muslims. These evil powers were the Persians in Iraq and the Romans in Syria. These two dwindling empires that clung tenaciously to the distorted remnant of their past glory were not only afflicting the people of Iraq and Syria with horrible torment, but also manipulating them. Notwithstanding the fact that the majority populations were Arabs, they instigated them to fight Muslim Arabs who carried the standard of the new religion which sought to pull down the vestiges of the ancient world and eradicate the decay and corruption in which it was steeped. The great and blessed caliph sent his orders to Khaalid to march towards Iraq, so the hero did so.

I wish that I were given more space to follow up in detail the proceedings of his magnificent victory.

Upon arriving in Iraq, the first thing that Khaalid did was to dispatch messages to every governor and deputy who ruled the provinces and cities of Iraq in the name of the emperor. These messages were as follows: In the name of Allah, the Most Beneficent, the Most Merciful. Khaalid Ibn Al-Waliid sends this message to the satraps of Persia. Peace will be upon him who follows the guidance. All praises and thanks be to Allah Who dispersed your power and thwarted your deceitful plots. On the one hand, he who performs our prayers directing his face to our Qiblah to face the Sacred Mosque in Makkah and eats our slaughtered animals is a Muslim. He has the same rights and duties that we have. On the other hand, if you do not want to embrace Islam, then as soon as you receive my message, send over the jizyah (tax levied upon non-Muslim people who are under the protection of a Muslim government) and I give you my word that I will respect and honor this covenant. But if you do not agree to either choice, then, by Allah, I will send to you people who crave death as much as you crave life.

Khaalid's scouts whom he planted everywhere warned him against the enormity of the armies that were organized by the commanders of Persia in Iraq. As usual, Khaalid did not waste much time. Therefore, he flung his soldiers against the falsehood of disbelief so as to devastate it.

Victory followed him wherever he went, from Al-Ubullah, to As-Sadiir, An-Najaf, Al-Hiirah, Al-Anbaar then Al-Kaadhimiyah. There was one victory procession after another. The glad tidings of Khaalid's arrival blew like a fresh breeze wherever he went to usher in Islam. The weak and oppressed people found sanctuary in the new religion that saved them from the occupation and oppression of the Persians.

It was impressive that Khaalid's first order to his troops was, "Do not attack or hurt the peasants. Leave them to work at peace unless some of them attack you. Only then, I permit you to defend yourselves".

He marched on with his victorious army, swept his enemies, and cut through their ranks like a knife cutting through melting butter. The Aadhaan resounded everywhere. I wonder if it had reached the Romans in Syria? Did they realize that cries of "Allah is the Greatest" signaled the end of their deteriorating civilizations? Indeed, they must have heard. In fact, the Aadhaan cast terror into them, yet in a desperate attempt to recapture the phantom of their empire, they decided heedlessly to fight a battle of despair and perdition.

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Abu Bakr As-siddiiq mobilized his armies and chose a group of his prominent commanders such as Abu `Ubaidah Ibn Al-Jarraah Mar Ibn Al-'Aas Yaziid Ibn Abi Sufyaan and Mu'aawiyah Ibn Abi Sufyaan to lead them.

When the Roman emperor heard the news of the mobilization of these armies, he advised his ministers and commanders to make peace with the Muslims to avoid inevitable defeat. However, his ministers and commanders insisted on fighting and maintained, "By our Lord, we will make Abu Bakr's hair stand on end before his horses breed in our land." Consequently, they mobilized an army estimated at 240,000 warriors.

The Muslim commanders dispatched this terrifying news to Abu Bakr, who pledged, "By Allah, I will rid them of their doubts through Khaalid." Thus, the antidote of their evil suggestions of mutiny, aggression, and disbelief, namely Khaalid Ibn Al-Waliid, was ordered to go on an expedition to Syria, where he was to command the Muslim armies.

Khaalid promptly acted upon his orders and left Iraq under Al- Muthanna Ibn Haarithah's supervision and marched with his troops until they reached the Muslim headquarters in Syria. His ingenuity enabled him to organize the Muslim armies and coordinate their different positions in no time. Shortly before the outbreak of war, he addressed his warriors after he had praised and thanked Allah, saying, "This is Allah's day. On this day, we must not give way to pride nor let injustice overrule. I advise you to purify your jihad and your deeds for Allah. Let us take turns in command. Let each and everyone of us take over the command for a day."

"This is Allah's day." What a wonderful onset! "We must not give way to pride nor let injustice overrule." This sentence is even more graceful, adequate, and awesome. On the one hand, the great leader was not lacking in self-denial and cleverness, for in spite of the fact that the caliph had assigned the command of the army to him, he did not want to give Satan a chance to whisper in the breasts of his soldiers. Therefore, he relinquished his absolute hold on the army to every soldier in the ranks even though he was already the commander. Thus, the commander of the army rotated from day to day.

The enormous and well-equipped Roman army was really terrifying. On the other hand, the Roman commander realized that time was in the Muslims' favor, for they were given to protracted battles which would guarantee their victory. Therefore, he decided to mobilize all their troops for a quick battle to finish off the Arabs once and for all.

Undoubtedly the courageous Muslims, on that day, were gripped by fear and anxiety, yet in such predicaments they always resorted to their faith, in which they found hope and victory. Notwithstanding the might of the Roman armies, the experienced Abu Bakr had firm belief in Khaalid's abilities; therefore he said, "Khaalid is the man for it. By Allah, I will rid them of their doubts with Khaalid."

Let the Romans parade their terrifying, enormous forces, for the Muslims had the antidote. Ibn Al-Waliid mobilized and rallied his army, then divided it into brigades. He laid out a new plan for attack and defense that adhered to the Roman war strategy and tactics with which he was well-acquainted from his past experience with the Persians. He was ready for all possibilities. Strangely enough, the battle raged exactly as he had imagined it would, step by step and one fight after another. If he had actually counted the number of strokes of swords, he would not have been much more accurate. Before the two armies clashed, he was worried about the possibility that some of the soldiers, especially those who had newly embraced Islam, might flee upon seeing the terrifying and enormous Roman army.

Khaalid believed that the ingenuity of victory and firmness were one and the same. He believed that the Muslim army could not afford the loss of even one of its soldiers, for it was enough to spread malignant panic and havoc inside the army, which was something that even the entire Roman army could not succeed in doing. In consequence, he was extremely firm concerning anyone who deserted his post and weapon and ran away. In the Battle of Yarmouk, in particular, and afterwards, his troops took their positions. He called the Muslim women and, for the first time, gave them swords. He ordered them to stand at the rear of the lines to "Kill anyone who flees." It was the magic touch of a mastermind.

Shortly before the battle erupted, the Roman commander asked Khaalid to show himself, for he wanted a few words with him. Khaalid rode towards him, then they galloped to the area that separated the two armies. Mahan, the Roman commander, addressed Khaalid saying, "We know that nothing but

weariness and hunger made you leave your country and go on this expedition. If you wish, we shall give ten dinars, clothes, and food to every one of you, on one condition, that you return to your country and next year we will do the same.

Khaalid gnashed his teeth, as he was provoked by his flagrant lack of manners, yet he repressed himself and answered confidently, "We didn't leave our country out of hunger as you said, but we heard that Roman blood is very delicious and tasty, so we have decided to quench our thirst with it."

Swiftly, the hero rode back to the ranks of his army and raised the Muslim standard to the full length of his arm, then he launched the attack. Allahu akbar. Let the breeze of Paradise blow!

At once, his army was like a missile as it charged into the battlefield. They met in an extraordinary, monstrous, and deadly combat. The Romans rushed into the battlefield with an enormous number, yet they found that their foes were not an easy prey. The self-sacrifice and firmness that the Muslims displayed on that day were impressive.

In the first place, one of the Muslim soldiers rushed to Abu `Ubaidah Ibn Al-jarraah (May Allah be pleased with him) during the battle and said, "I have set my mind on martyrdom. Do you want me to take a message to the Prophet (PBUH) when I meet him?" Abu `Ubaidah answered, "Yes, tell him we have indeed found true what our Lord had promised us." Immediately, the man darted like an arrow into the horrors of the battlefield. He craved death; therefore, he fought fiercely with one sword while thousands of swords were thrust into him until he won martyrdom.

Secondly, Ikramah Ibn Abu Jahl - yes, he was the son of the infamous Abu Jahl. He called out to the Muslims when the Romans were killing anyone who came within the sweep of their swords and said, "I fought against the Prophet before Allah guided me to Islam, so how can I possibly be afraid of fighting Allah's enemy after I submitted myself to Islam?"

Then he cried out, "Who gives me the pledge to death?" He was given the pledge to death by a group of Muslims. Then they broke through the enemy lines. They preferred martyrdom to victory. Allah accepted the bargain they had concluded through their pledge and they won martyrdom.

Thirdly, other Muslims were badly wounded and water was brought so that they might quench their thirst, yet when it was offered to the first one, he pointed to his brother who was lying next to him more seriously wounded and who was more thirsty. Again, when this brother was offered water, he in his turn pointed to his brother. Finally, the majority of them died thirsty after they had demonstrated an incredible example of self-denial and self-sacrifice. Indeed, the Battle of Al-Yarmuuk witnessed unprecedented and unmatched instances of self-sacrifice.

Among these striking masterpieces of self-sacrifice exhibited by the determined will of the Muslims was the extraordinary portrait of Khaalid Ibn Al-Waliid at the head of only 100 soldiers who flung themselves against 40,000 Romans. Khaalid kept calling out to his 100 soldiers saying, "By Allah, the Romans seemed to have lost their patience and courage, therefore I pray to Allah to let you have the upper hand over them."

How could 100 soldiers have the upper hand over 40,000? It is, indeed, incredible! Yet, were not the hearts of these 100 soldiers filled with faith in Allah the Most High, the Most Great? Were they not filled with faith in His trustworthy and honest Prophet (PBUH)? Were they not filled with faith in that cause which represents the most persistent vital issue in life? This cause represents piety and righteousness. And was not their Caliph Abu Bakr As-siddiiq (Allah be pleased with him) the man who, while his flags were raised above the whole world, sat there in Al-Madiinah, the new capital of the new world, milking with his own hands the ewes of widows and kneading with his own hands the bread of orphans? Was not their Commander Khaalid Ibn Al-Waliid the antidote for the doubts of tyranny, arrogance, oppression, and transgression? Was not the Sword of Allah drawn against the powers of backwardness, decay, and disbelief? Were not all these portraits a depiction of truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth?

So let the breeze of victory blow! Let it blow strong, mighty, And victorious!

\* \* \*

Khaalid's ingenuity impressed the Roman officers and commanders so much so that Jerjah, a Roman commander, asked Khaalid to show himself during a rest in the fighting. When they met, the Roman commander asked him, "Khaalid, tell me the truth and do not lie, for the freeman doesn't lie. Did Allah send down on your Prophet a heavenly sword and he gave it to you, so that it enables you to kill anyone who comes within its sweep?" Khaalid answered, "No." The man exclaimed, "Then why do they call you the Sword of Allah?" Khaalid explained, "Allah sent His Prophet to us. Some of us believed in him and others disbelieved in him. I was among the disbelievers until Allah guided my heart to Islam and to His Prophet (PBUH) and I gave him my allegiance. Therefore, the Prophet supplicated Allah for me and said, 'You are the Sword of Allah.'" The Roman commander asked, "What do you invite people to?" Khaalid answered, "We invite people to monotheism and to Islam." He asked, "Does anyone who submits himself to Islam have the same reward as you?" Khaalid answered, "Yes, and even better." Jerjah exclaimed, "How, when you embraced Islam before he did?"

Khaalid answered, "We lived with the Prophet and saw with our own eyes his signs and miracles. Now anyone who had the chance to see what we saw and hear what we heard was expected to submit himself to Islam sooner or later. As for you who did not see or hear him, if despite this you believe in him and in the unseen, you will find better and greater reward if you purify your conscience and intentions to Allah."

The Roman commander cried out as he urged his horse closer to Khaalid and stood next to him, "Please, Khaalid, teach me Islam!" He submitted himself to Islam and prayed two rak'ahs. Soon, combat erupted and once again, the Roman Jerjah fought, but this time on the Muslim side until he won martyrdom.

Now, let us watch closely how human greatness was manifested in one of its most remarkable scenes. The first version narrated by the historian said that while Khaalid was commanding the Muslim army in this bloody and crucial war and wresting victory out of the claws of the Romans with admirable master strokes, the new caliph, `Umar Ibn Al-Khattaab, Commander of the Faithful, dispatched a message to him in which he saluted the Muslim army and announced the sad news of Abu Bakr's death (May Allah be pleased with him). Then he ordered Khaalid to give up his command to Abu `Ubaidah Ibn Al-jarraah. Khaalid read the message and supplicated Allah to have mercy on Abu Bakr and bestow His guidance on `Umar. Then he strictly ordered the messenger not to tell anyone about the purport of the message and not to leave his place or communicate with anyone.

Then Khaalid resumed his command of the combat and concealed the news of Abu Bakr's death and `Umar's orders until they had achieved victory. Finally, the hour of victory came and the Romans were defeated.

It was only then that the hero approached Abu `Ubaidah and saluted him. At first, Abu `Ubaidah thought that he did so in jest, yet he soon realized how serious and true this news was. Instantly, he kissed Khaalid between his eyes and praised his greatness.

The second version of the same incident is that the message was sent to Abu 'Ubaidah, who concealed the news from Khaalid until the burden of war was over. Which of the two versions is authentic is not our concern here. The only thing that interests us here is Khaalid's conduct, which was superb in both versions.

I cannot think of a situation in which Khaalid manifested more loyalty and sincerity than this one. It did not matter to him whether he was a commander or a soldier. Both ranks were one and the same to him as long as they enabled him to carry out his duties towards Allah Whom he believed in, the Prophet (PBUH) whom he gave allegiance to, and, finally, towards the religion which he embraced. This great self-control of Khaalid and of other Muslims was not possible without the help and guidance of the

unique type of caliphs who were at the head of the Muslim nation at that time. These caliphs were Abu Bakr and `Umar. The mere mention of either name conjures up all the unique and great traits created in mankind. Notwithstanding the fact that Khaalid and `Umar were not exactly best friends; `Umar's decency, justice, and remarkable greatness were not in the least questioned by Khaalid. Hence, his decisions and judgments were not questioned. The unbiased conscience of the man who issued these orders reached the apex of piety, steadfastness, and veracity.

\* \* \*

`Umar, the Commander of the Faithful, had nothing against Khaalid but his overburdening and sharp sword. He vented these reservations when he suggested to Abu Bakr that Khaalid should be dismissed after the death of Maalik Ibn Nuwairah. He said, "Khaalid's sword is overburdening." He meant that it was swift, sharp, and harsh. The Caliph As-siddiiq said, "I would not sheathe what Allah had unsheathed against the disbelievers."

Notice that `Umar did not say that Khaalid was overburdening but used "overburdening" to describe the sword rather than the man! Not only did these words manifest the elevated politeness of the Commander of the Faithful but also his profound appreciation of Khaalid.

Khaalid was a man of war from head to toe. He dedicated his whole life before and after his Islam to becoming a shrewd and daring knight. Even his environment and the way he was brought up were devoted to that ultimate goal.

Whenever he traveled back in time, he saw the wars he waged against the Prophet (PBUH) and his Companions and the strokes of his sword that had slain believers and worshipers. Those memories agitated him and made him conscience stricken: Therefore, his sword longed to devastate the pillars of disbelief to compensate for his wrongdoings in the past.

I think you still remember what went on between Khaalid and the Prophet (PBUH) at the beginning of this chapter, particularly when Khaalid asked the Prophet, "Please ask Allah's forgiveness for me for all the wrongdoings I committed to hinder men from Allah's path." You also remember that even when the Prophet told him that Islam erases all the wrongdoings committed before it, he pleaded with him until he finally promised him to ask Allah's forgiveness for him for all the mischief he had committed before he submitted himself to Islam.

Surely when the sword is carried by such an extraordinary knight as Khaalid and thrust upon the commands of a conscience, revived by the warmth of purification, sacrifice, and absolute loyalty to a religion that was surrounded by conspiracy and animosity, it will be impossible for this sword to throw aside its strict principles or its spontaneous sharpness.

For instance, when the Prophet (PBUH) sent him to some Arab tribes after the conquest of Makkah, he said to him, "I am sending you there not as a warrior, but as a Muslim who invites to the way of Allah." Unfortunately, his sword got the better of him and forced him into the role of the warrior, obliterating the role of the Muslim who invites to the way of Allah that the Prophet (PBUH) had ordered him to follow. When the Prophet (PBUH) heard what Khaalid had done, he was stricken with anxiety and pain. Then he turned in the direction of the Qiblah and raised his hands in supplication and apology to Allah and said, "O Allah, I free myself from blame for what Khaalid has committed." Then he sent `Ally to give compensatory blood-money to the family of the deceased. Narrators said that Khaalid absolved himself from blame when he said that `Abd Allah Ibn Hudhaafah As-Sahmii told him, "The Prophet has ordered you to attack them for their rejection of Islam." In spite of that, Khaalid possessed superhuman energy. He was overtaken by an irresistible urge to devastate the idolatry of the ancient world. If we watched him pulling down the `Uzzaa idol which the Prophet (PBUH) ordered him to destroy, we would see that the resentment and wrath he showed while striking were so aggressive and violent that he did not seem to be striking at a mass of rock but at a whole army, cutting the throats of its soldiers and spreading death everywhere. For he kept striking with his right hand, then with his left hand, then with his foot. He

yelled at the scattered rubble and dust, "'Uzzaa, I don't believe in you! Glory is not to be yours! I can see that Allah has humiliated you!"

We will always repeat the words of `Umar the Commander of the Faithful about Khaalid: "Women who give birth to men like khaalid are extremely rare," as well as our earnest wish along with `Umar that his sword would lose its rashness.

On the day of his death, `Umar cried excessively. Later, people learned that his grief was not only caused by his personal loss, but also by the loss of his last chance to return the command to khaalid now that people were no longer infatuated with him. The reasons behind his dismissal were now gone. Only this time, unfortunately, the man was gone too.

Indeed, the great hero rushed to take his place in Paradise. For it was about time he caught his breath, considering the fact that no one on earth had been more restless than he. It was really about time his exhausted body would sleep for a while, considering that he was described by his friends and enemies alike as "A sleepless man who would not let anyone sleep!"

If it were for him to decide, he would have chosen to live on until he had demolished all the decaying ruins of the ancient world and continued his jihaad in the way of Allah and Islam.

The sweet fragrance of this man's spirit will linger forever more whenever horses neigh and the edge of swords glitter and the standards of monotheism flutter over Muslim armies. He used to say, "Nothing is dearer to me than a frosty night in the company of an infantry of Muhaajiruun when we are to attack the disbelievers in the morning. Not even the night in which I was wedded to a new bride or received the glad tidings of the birth of a new child."

Therefore, the tragedy of his life, in his Opinion, was dying in bed after he had spent his entire life on horseback, raising his glittering sword. It was difficult for him to accept that he was to die in bed after all the battles he had fought next to the Prophet (PBUH), and after he had annihilated the Roman and Persian empires and after he had galloped to Iraq where he achieved one victory after another until he had liberated it. Then he had turned to Syria where he had achieved one victory after another until he had set it free from the bonds of disbelief.

In spite of his position as a commander, he was so modest that if you had seen him you would not have distinguished him from among his soldiers, yet at the same time, you would have known at once that he must be a commander from the way he shouldered responsibilities and set himself as a good example.

Again, the tragedy of this hero's life was dying in bed. He said as his tears flowed, "All the battles I fought in left my body scarred with wounds and stabs everywhere, yet here I am dying in bed as if I had never witnessed war before. I hope that the cowards will not have a day's rest even after I am dead."

These words were becoming of such a man. When the moment of departure was close, he dictated his will. Can you guess to whom he left all his valuables? It was to `Umar Ibn Al Khattaab himself. Can you guess what were his valuables? They were his horse and his weapon. And what? He had nothing else to bequeath but his horse and weapon.

Thus, his only obsession while he was alive was achieving victory over the enemies of truth. He was not in the least obsessed with life, with all its splendors and luxury. There was one thing that he obsessively cherished and treasured. It was his helmet. He lost it in the Battle of Al-Yarmuuk, and he exhausted himself and others in searching for it. When he was criticized for that, he said, "I keep it for luck, for it has some hairs of the Prophet's forehead. It makes me feel optimistic that victory is within reach."

Finally, the body of the hero left his home carried on the shoulders of his companions. The deceased's mother took one last look at the hero, her eyes full of determination tinged with sadness as she commended him to Allah's protection and said, "there are far, far better than a thousand men who flung themselves into the battlefield. Do you ask me about his valor? He was much more courageous than a huge lion that protects its cubs in the time of danger. Do you ask me about his generosity? He was far more generous than an overwhelming torrential rain that slides down from the mountains!" `Umar's heart throbbed and his eyes flowed with tears when he heard her recite these lines of poetry: "You spoke the truth. By Allah, he was everything you said he was."

The hero was buried. His companions stood at his grave in reverence. They felt that the whole universe was so peaceful, humble, and silent that it seemed as if the whole world went into mourning.

I imagine that this awesome stillness was broken only by the neighing of a horse that tugged at its halter and went to its master's grave guided by his scent. As it reached the silent congregation and the moist grave, it shook its head and neighed sharply as it used to do when the hero was on its back devastating the thrones of Persia and Rome, curing the delusions of paganism and oppression, and eliminating the powers of backwardness and disbelief to pave the way for Islam. As it fixed its eyes on the grave, it kept on raising and lowering its head as if it were bidding its last farewell to its master and hero. Then it stood still with its head raised, yet its eyes flowed with tears. Khalid bequeathed it along with his weapons to `Umar in the way of Allah. Yet who is valiant and great enough to deserve to mount it after Khalid?

Alas, you hero of all victory, the dawn of all nights. You soared with your army above the horrors of war when you said to your soldiers, "The darkest hour is that before dawn." This became a saying afterwards.

May Allah bless your morning, Abu Sulaimaan. May Allah bestow glory, praise, and eternity on you, Khalid.

Let us now repeat after `Umar the Commander of the Faithful. The sweet elegy with which he paid his last farewell to Khalid: "May Allah have mercy on you, Abu Sulaimaan. What you have now is far better than what you had in life, for you are now with Allah. You were honored in life and content in death."

(27)

## TALHAH IBN `UBAID ALLAH

### The Falcon on the Day of Uhud

"Of the believers are men who have been true to their pledge to GOD, from them some have fulfilled their pledges, and some are still in hope of doing so, and they never change at heart" (33 : 23).

The Prophet (PBUH) recited this glorious verse and then turned to his Companions, pointed to Talhah and said, "Anyone who wants to please himself by looking at a man walking on the earth who has fulfilled his pledge of martyrdom Should look at Talhah."

The Prophet's Companions never wished nor did their hearts ever aspire and long for a better announcement than the one the Prophet (PBUH) directed to Talhah Ibn `Ubaid Allah. By such words he could feel Secure towards his destiny and fate. He was going to live and die as One of those who have been true to their pledge so that neither civil strife could affect him lassitude influence him, nor any kind of

The Prophet (PBUH) announced Paradise to him. How then was the life of Such a one who deserved this fine announcement?

He was trading in the land of Basraa, when he met One of the most virtuous monks there. He told him that a Prophet who was going to appear in the Sacred Land and whose appearance was prophesied by all virtuous prophets had risen and his era had already begun. Talhah was very much afraid to miss the procession of guidance, mercy, and Salvation.

When Talhah returned to his homeland Makkah after having spent months in Basraa and traveling around, he found a lot of talk taking place here and there. Whenever he met someone or a group of Makkah inhabitants they would talk to him about Muhammad the Trustworthy, about the angel sent down to him, about the mission he was carrying to the Arabs in particular and all people in general.

The first thing he asked about was Abu Bakr. He learned that Abu Bakr had returned with a caravan and trade not long ago and that he was standing at the side of Muhammad, believing in and defending him

Talhah said to himself, "Muhammad and Abu Bakr? By Allah, both of them would never join each other and agree upon falsehood. 1 Muhammad has already reached the age of 40. In all these years we've never heard him speak one single lie. Is it possible that he would now lie about Allah and say, 'He sent me as a prophet and He sent me an angel'? It's something hard to believe."

He quickened his steps, directing them towards Abu Bakr's house. They did not talk for long because his long aspiration to meet the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) and to swear to him the oath of allegiance was much faster than his heartbeats.

Abu Bakr accompanied him to the Prophet (PBUH) and he soon embraced Islam, joining there and then the blessed ranks!

That is how Talhah became one of the very early converts.

Despite his honorable rank among his clan, his vast wealth, and his successful trade, he had to taste his own portion of the Quraish's persecution. The task of torturing him and Abu Bakr was given to

Nawfal Ibn Khuwailid, who was called The Lion of the Quraish. However, their persecution did not last long, as the Quraish soon felt ashamed and began to think about the consequences of their deeds.

Talhah emigrated to Al-Madiinah when the Prophet (PBUH) ordered the Muslims to emigrate. After that he experienced all the battles together with the Prophet (PBUH) except the Battle of Badr because the Prophet (PBUH) had sent him and Sa'iid Ibn Zaid on an assignment outside Al-Madiinah.

When they had fulfilled their task and were on their way back to Al Madiinah, the Prophet (PBUH) and his Companions were returning home after the battle. Talhah and his companion felt so sad and tormented for having missed the reward of joining the Prophet (PBUH) in his first jihaad battle.

However, the Prophet (PBUH) accorded them peace of mind when he informed them that their reward was exactly like the warrior's reward; moreover, he gave them a share of the booty exactly like the share he gave to each one who had fought the battle.

Then came the Battle of Uhud, when the Quraish, with all their might and tyranny, came to take blood revenge for the Day of Badr and to restore their dignity by defeating the Muslims once and for all, a defeat which was thought by the Quraish to be a simple matter and a predetermined fate. The fierce battle took place, and soon the battlefield was filled with its awful harvest: calamity overtook the polytheists.

Then when the Muslims saw them retreating, they laid down their weapons and the archers descended from their posts and began to collect their share of booty. Immediately and suddenly the Quraish army turned back to hold the field and tip the balance of the battle in their favor.

The fighting's ferocity, cruelty, and crushing resumed. The surprise attack had the effect of scattering the army.

Talhah saw that the side of the battlefield where the Prophet (PBUH) was standing had become the target of the polytheists' concentration. He immediately hurried towards the Prophet (PBUH).

He (May Allah be pleased with him) traversed a path, a long one, although it was in fact a short distance.

It was a path in which a single inch could not be traversed except by confronting tens of ferocious swords and tens of mad lances.

He could see from a far distance how the Prophet's (PBUH) cheek was bleeding and how he was silently suffering. It was then that Talhah got mad, leaped once or twice over the path of horror to reach the Prophet (PBUH), in front of whom he had to experience what he was afraid of: the swords of the polytheists drawn towards the Prophet (PBUH), surrounding him, wanting to get at him.

Talhah stood there like a raging army, striking with his sword to the left and right. He could see the Prophet (PBUH) bleeding and his pains becoming more and more unbearable. He helped him and carried him away from the hole where his foot had gotten stuck.

He supported the Prophet (PBUH) with his left hand and chest, backing up to a safe, secure place, while his right hand (May Allah bless his right hand) fought the swords of the polytheists who surrounded the Prophet and who swarmed the battlefield like locusts.

Let Abu Bakr As-siddiiq describe for us the whole scene of battle. `Aa'ishah once said: Whenever Abu Bakr recalled the Day of Uhud he used to say, It was the Tallaah's day. I was the first who approached the Prophet (PBUH). He said to me and to Abu Ubaidah Ibn Al-Jarraah, "Watch out, for your

brother." We looked at him, and we could see more than 70 stabs. His finger was cut off. We tried to remedy his condition.

In all the different events and battles, Talhah was always to be found in the forefront fighting in the cause of Allah, redeeming the Prophet's standard.

Talhah lived among the Muslim community, worshipping Allah with the worshipers, fighting in the cause of Allah with those who fought for truth, following the basic principles of the new religion which was revealed in order to bring people all people out of darkness into light.

After he fulfilled his duties towards Allah, he went on seeking the bounty of Allah, expanding and promoting his successful trade and business.

Talhah was one of the wealthiest Muslims. His whole fortune was put in the service of his religion, the standard of which he carried with the Prophet (PBUH). He spent it without measure, and so Allah increased it for him without measure.

The Prophet (PBUH) called him "Talhah the Excellent", " Talhah the Splendid and "Talhah the Generous" to demonstrate his bountiful generosity.

How often did he give his whole fortune away. Then Allah the Ever-Generous returned it to him manifold! His wife Su'adaa Bint `Awf reported: Once I approached Talhah. I saw him worried and asked him, "What's the matter?" He said, "The money which I possess is now so abundant that it worries me and makes me feel distressed." I told him, "Never mind, I'll distribute it." He set out to call people and to divide it among them till there wasn't a single dirham left.

On another occasion, he sold his land for a very high price, and when he looked at the pile of money, his tears rolled down and he said, " A man in whose house all that money is to remain for a night and he doesn't know for sure what will happen to him is certainly deceived by Allah."

Then he called some of his companions to carry his money with them and walk through the streets of Al-Madiinah distributing it until in the last part of the night he was without a single dirham of that money.

Jaabir Ibn Abd Allah described his wealth saying, "I never saw anybody giving out so much money without being asked as did Talhah Ibn Ubaid Allah."

He was one of the kindest toward his relatives and kin. He supported them all, though they were numerous. It was once said about him, "He never left an orphan without supporting him and his dependents. He provided for the marriage of the unmarried ones, he provided service for the disabled ones, and paid the debts of the indebted ones.

As-Saa'i'b Ibn Zaid once said, " I accompanied Talhah during travels and during times of settlement. I never saw anybody more generous in terms of money, clothes, and food than Talhah."

The well known civil strife broke out during the caliphate of `Uthmaan. Talhah supported the argument of `Uthmaan's opponents, standing on their side in most of their quests to witness change and reformation.

Did he therefore, in such a position, call for `Uthmaan's murder, or even feel pleased by it? Never! If he had known that the civil strife would develop in such a way, bursting into mad spite, expressing itself in such cruel crime, the victim of which was "The Man of Two Lights" Uthmaan (May Allah be pleased with him)... We say, if he had known that the civil strife would in the long run lead to such an end and such a conflict, he would have resisted it, and it would have been resisted by the rest of the

Companions who supported him at the beginning, recognizing it as a movement of opposition and warning, and no more.

However, Talhah's stance turned out to be his "life conflict" after the brutal way in which `Uthmaan was surrounded and killed. Imam `Aliy had hardly accepted the oath of allegiance from Talhah and Az-Zubair at Al-Madiinah, when they both asked permission to go to Makkah for `Umrah.

From Makkah they both turned to Al-Basrah, where a great multitude was gathering to avenge `Uthmaan's death.

At last it was the Battle of Al-Jamal, where those calling for revenge met with the party supporting `Aliy.

Whenever `Aliy thought about this difficult situation which Islam and Muslims were confronting in this horrible dispute, he burst into sorrowful tears and his laments grew louder and louder. He was forced into this difficult situation.

Being the Caliph of the Muslims, he could not and it was not his right to be tolerant towards any revolt against the state or any armed opposition to the established authority. To crush a rebellion of that sort, then, he had to face his brethren, his companions, friends and the followers of his Prophet and his religion, those with whom he had so often encountered and combated the polytheist armies and with whom he had so often joined under the standard of monotheism in battles that refined their Islamic behavior and melted away all weakness and disgrace, thereby turning them into brethren - and indeed brethren - supporting each other.

What a conflicting situation! What a difficult harsh test! In order to find a way out of such a conflict and to save the blood of the Muslims, Imam `Aliy did his utmost.

Nonetheless, the factors opposing Islam - and they were many - which had met their defeat at the hands of the Muslim state in the days of its great leader `Umar, had kindled the civil uprising and continued to stoke it and follow its events and magnitude.

He cried a lot and wept abundantly when he saw The Mother of the Faithful `Aa'ishah on her camel howdah at the head of the army which rose to fight him. When he saw Talhah and Az-Zubair, the disciples of the Prophet (PBUH), he called to them to come out to meet him, so they did. They approached him till their horses touched each other. He said to Talhah, "O Talhah! Did you come with the wife of the Messenger of Allah to use her in your fight while hiding your wife at home?" Then he said to Az-Zubair, "O Zubair! I ask you by Allah. Do you remember the day when the Prophet (PBUH) passed you when we were in such- and-such a place, then he said to you, `O Zubair! Do you love `Aliy? You replied, `Why shouldn't I love my nephew and cousin and the follower of my religion? He said to you, "O Zubair! By Allah, you will fight him, being unjust to him. Az-Zubair (May Allah be pleased with him) said, "Yes, now I remember, I had forgotten that. By Allah, I won't fight you. Az-Zubair and Talhah abstained from taking part in this civil war. They abstained as soon as things were clarified. When they saw `Ammaar Ibn Yaasir fighting on `Aliy's side, they remembered the Prophet's prophecy to `Ammaar: "You will be killed by the unjust party." If `Ammaar were killed in that war in which Talhah was taking part, then Talhah was unjust.

Talhah and Az-Zubair retreated from the whole fight and had to pay for that retreat with their lives. But they met Allah pleased and delighted with what they had been endowed by Allah: insight and guidance.

As for Az-Zubair, a man named Amr Ibn Jarmuuz followed him and killed him while he was praying.

As for Talhah he was pierced with a lance by Marwaan Ibn Al-Hakim , which killed him on the spot.

The murder of `Uthmaan represented in Talhah's conscience his "life conflict", as previously mentioned. Despite the fact that, he did not take part in the murder nor agree to it, he had just supported the

opposition against him (Aliy) at a time when it was not obvious that it would intensify and develop into a more serious conflict until it turned into a dreadful crime.

When he took his place on the day of Al-Jamal amidst the army fighting against the Ibn Abi Taalib which sought to take revenge for `Uthmaan's murder, he wished that his position would be an atonement making him feel at ease towards the pressure of his conscience. Before the start of the battle he was supplicating with a voice choked with tears saying, "O my Lord, accept me this day in favor of `Uthmaan until You are pleased."

When they met `Aliy face to face, he and Az-Zubair both said they felt illuminated by `Aliy's words and thereby saw it to be right to leave the battlefield.

However, martyrdom had been reserved for them. Indeed, martyrdom was his fate, and he was to meet it and it was to meet him, wherever he was.

Did not the Prophet (PBUH) once say about him, "He's one of those who passed away. Whoever wants to please himself by seeing a martyr walking on the earth, go let him look at Talhah." Thereby did the martyr meet his inevitable fate, and the Battle of Al-Jamal was over. The Mother of the Believers realized that she had made a hasty decision; therefore she left Al-Basrah for the Sacred House and then Al-Madiinah, keeping aloof from the fighting and dispute. Imam `Aliy provided her with all means of comfort and respect.

When `Aliy inspected all the martyrs of the battle, he set out to pray the funeral prayer upon them, those who fought on his side as well as those who fought against him.

When he finished burying Talhah and Az-Zubair, he stood saluting them for the last time. He finished his words saying, "I wish to be with Talhah and Az-Zubair and `Uthmaan among those whom Allah described thus: "We removed from their hearts any malice therein, as brothers they shall rest upon couches facing each other " (15: 47).

Then he gazed at their grave with kind, gentle, pure, and sad eyes saying, "I've heard with my two ears the Prophet (PBUH) saying, "Talhah and Az-Zubair are my neighbors in Paradise".

## ABU HURAIRAH

## The Memory of the Revelation Era

It is true that a person's intelligence reckons against him, and those who own extraordinary gifts often pay the price at a time when they should receive a reward or thanks. The noble Companion Abu Hurairah is one of those. He had an unusual gift which was his strong memory.

He (May Allah be pleased with him) was good in the art of listening and his memory was good in the art of storing. He used to listen, understand, and memorize; then he hardly forgot one word, no matter how long his life lasted. That is why his gift made him memorize and narrate the Prophetic traditions (Hadiths) more than any of the Companions of the Messenger (PBUH).

During the period of Al-Wada'iin, the writers who were specialized in telling lies about the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) misused Abu Hurairah's wide reputation for narrating about the Messenger of Allah (PBUH), and whenever they fabricated a hadith they used to say, "Abu Hurairah said...." By so doing they were attempting to make Abu Hurairah's reputation and status as a narrator about the Prophet (PBUH) questionable. However, because of the extraordinary efforts exerted by great reverent people who devoted their lives to serve the Prophetic Hadith and reject every falsehood, Abu Hurairah (May Allah be pleased with him) was saved from the lies and fabrications that the vicious wanted to infiltrate into Islam through him and to make him bear their sins.

Now, when we hear a preacher, lecturer or the one who delivers the Friday sermon saying this transmitted expression, "Narrated by Abu Hurairah (May Allah be pleased with him): The Messenger of Allah (PBUH) said,...."

I say when you hear this name in that form, or when you meet it many times in books of hadith, biography, jurisprudence, and religious books generally, you have to know that you are meeting the most interesting personality of the Companions with regard to his ability and talents of listening because of the wonderful traditions and wise instructions that he memorized about the Prophet (PBUH), which was his great fortune and incomparable gift.

Having this gift (May Allah be pleased with him), he was naturally one of the Companions who were most capable of vividly reminding you of those days when the Messenger (PBUH) and his Companions were living and of transporting you to that horizon which witnessed the glorious deeds of the Prophet (PBUH) and his Companions who gave vitality and significance to life and led to the right path.

So if these lines have moved your curiosity to get introduced to Abu Hurairah and hear some things about him, here is what you want.

He was one of those who reflected the Islamic revolution and all the tremendous changes that it brought about! He changed from a workman to a master, from a lost man in the crowd to an Imam and outstanding man, from a worshiper of accumulated stones to a believer in Allah, the One, the irresistible.

He said. I was brought up as an orphan, and I emigrated as a poor man. I worked for Busrah Bint Ghazwaan for my daily food. I used to serve them when they dismounted, and walked near them when they rode. And now Allah has married her to me. All praise to Allah Who made the religion our support and made Abu Hurairah an Imam.

It was A.H.7 when he went to the Prophet (PBUH), while the latter was in Khaibar, and embraced Islam. From the time he pledged allegiance to the Prophet (PBUH), he would not part from him except to sleep. Thus were the four years in which he lived with the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) from the time he

embraced Islam till the Prophet died. We say that those four years were very long, full of virtuous words, deeds, and listening.

By virtue of his good nature, Abu Hurairah was able to play a prominent role by which he could serve the religion of Allah. There were many war heroes among the Companions. There were many jurists, propagators of the faith, and teachers, but the milieu and people lacked writing and scribes. In that time, mankind - not only Arabs - was not much concerned with writing. It was not a sign of development in any society. It was the same even in Europe not so long ago. Most of its kings, with Charlemagne at the top of the list, could not read or write, although they were intelligent and capable at the same time.

Let us go back to our talk about Abu Hurairah. He realized by his nature the need of the new society that Islam was building for those who would keep its legacy and teachings. There were scribes among the Companions who used to write, but they were few. Besides, some of them had no free time to be able to write every hadith that the Messenger uttered.

Abu Hurairah was not a scribe, but learned by heart, and he had this necessary free time, for he had no land to plant or commerce to take care of. Believing that he had embraced Islam late, he intended to compensate for what he had missed by accompanying and sitting with the Messenger (PBUH). Besides, he himself knew the gift Allah had bestowed on him, which was his broad, retentive memory, which became even broader and stronger after the Messenger (PBUH) had invoked Allah to bless it for him. Then why should he not be one of those who took the burden of keeping this legacy and transmitting it to the coming generations? Yes, this was the role that his talents made possible for him to play, and he had to play it without flagging.

Abu Hurairah was not one of the scribes, but, as we said, he had a strong memory that made him retain things in his mind very quickly. He had neither land to plant nor commerce to keep him busy; hence he used to not part from the presence of the Messenger, neither in travel nor at other times.

Thus, he devoted himself and his precise memory to memorizing the hadiths and instructions of the Messenger of Allah (PBUH). When the Prophet (PBUH) died, Abu Hurairah kept narrating his traditions, which made some Companions wonder how he could know all those hadiths? When did he hear them?

Abu Hurairah (May Allah be pleased with him) shed light on this phenomenon, as if defending himself against the doubts of some of the Companions.

He said: You say that Abu Hurairah narrates much about the Prophet (PBUH) and that the Muhaajiruun who preceded him to Islam do not narrate those traditions. But my friends among the Muhaajiruun were busy with their contracts in the market, and my friends among the Ansaar were busy with their lands. I was a poor man, always sitting with the Messenger of Allah, so I was present when they were absent, and I memorized if they forgot. Besides, one day the Prophet (PBUH) said, "Whoever spreads his garment till I finish my speech, then collects it to his chest, will never forget whatever I've said!" Therefore, I spread my clothes and he directed his speech to me, then I collected it. By Allah, I did not forget what he said to me later on. By Allah, I would have narrated nothing at all, but for a verse of Allah's Book: " Surely those who conceal the manifest Revelations and the guidance which We have revealed, after We have made it clear for the people in the Book, those it is who shall be cursed by GOD and by those who curse" (2:159).

This was the way Abu Hurairah explained the reason for being unique in narrating so many hadiths about the Messenger of Allah (PBUH). First, he had the time to accompany the Prophet more than any one else. Second, he had a strong memory blessed by the Messenger so it became stronger. Third, he did not narrate because he was fond of narrating but because spreading those traditions was the responsibility of his religion and life; otherwise he would be a concealer of the good and right, negligent of his duties, and would deserve the punishment of the negligent.

For these reasons he kept narrating, and nothing could stop or hinder him, even when `Umar, the Commander of the Faithful, told him, "Stop narrating about the Messenger of Allah, or I'll send you to the land of the Daws" - the land of his people. But this prohibition from the Commander of the Faithful was not an accusation of Abu Hurairah, but a support of a theory `Umar was adopting and stressing, that the Muslims during this very period should read and memorize nothing but the Qur'aan so that it would settle in their hearts and minds. The Qur'aan is Islam's book, constitution and dictionary. Narrating about the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) abundantly, especially in those years that followed his death (PBUH) when the Qur'aan was being compiled, caused unnecessary confusion. That is why `Umar used to say, "Get busy with the Qur'aan; it is Allah's words. He also used to say, "Narrate a little about the Messenger of Allah but for what can be followed."

When he sent Abu Muusaa Al-Ash'ariy to Iraq, he said to him, "You are going to people where you can hear the sound of the Qur'aan in their mosques as if it were a drone of bees. Let them do what they are doing and don't occupy them with traditions. I'm your partner in this." The Qur'aan had been compiled in a warranted way such that nothing had crept into it. But `Umar could not guarantee that some traditions were not slanted, forged, or taken as a way to tell lies about the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) and thus harm Islam.

Abu Hurairah appreciated `Umar's point of view, but he was also sure of himself and his honesty. He did not want to conceal anything of the traditions or knowledge that he thought would be a sin to conceal. Hence, whenever he found a chance to unload the traditions he had heard or understood from his breast, he did so.

An important reason which played a prominent role in provoking troubles around Abu Hurairah for talking about and narrating many traditions was the fact that there was another narrator in those days who used to narrate and exaggerate about the Messenger (PBUH), and the Muslim Companions were not certain of his traditions. This narrator was Ka'b Al-Ahbaar, who was a Jew who had embraced Islam.

Once Marwaan Ibn Al-Hakam wanted to examine Abu Hurairah's ability to memorize. He invited him to sit with him and asked him to narrate about the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) while a scribe sat behind a screen and was told to write whatever Abu Hurairah said. After a year, Marwaan invited him once again and asked him to narrate the same traditions the scribe had written. Abu Hurairah had not forgotten a single word!

He used to say about himself, "No one among the companions of the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) narrates about him more than I do except `Abd Allah Ibn Amr Ibn Al-'Aas. He used to write, but I didn't."

Imam Ash- Shaafiy (May Allah be pleased with him) said about him, "No one in his period was more capable of narrating traditions with such a memory than Abu Hurairah."

Al Bukhaariy (May Allah be pleased with him) said, "Almost eight hundred or more Companions, followers (the generation after the Companions) and people of knowledge narrated through Abu Hurairah." Thus, Abu Hurairah was a big, immortal school.

Abu Hurairah (May Allah be pleased with him) was an ever- and oft-returning worshiper who used to take turns with his wife and daughter in praying the whole night. He prayed one third of the night, his wife another third, and his daughter a third. Thus, not one hour of the night passed in Abu Hurairah's house without prayers. In order to be free to accompany the Messenger of Allah (PBUH), he suffered the cruelty of hunger like nobody else. He used to talk about the times when hunger was so cruel that he would put a stone on his stomach, press his liver with his hand, and fall in the mosque while twisting that stone such that some of his friends thought that he was epileptic, but he was not.

When he embraced Islam, he had only one continuously oppressing problem that would not let him sleep. That problem was his mother, for from that day onwards she refused to embrace Islam. Not only that, but she also used to hurt her son by speaking ill of the Messenger of Allah. One day she spoke to

Abu Hurairah about the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) in a way that he hated. So, he left her crying and sad and went to the Messenger's mosque.

Let us listen to him narrate the rest of the story: I went to the Messenger of Allah crying and said, "O Messenger of Allah, I used to call Umm Hurairah to Islam, and she used to refuse. Today, I called her, but she spoke to me about you in a way that I hated. Invoke Allah to guide Umm Hurairah to Islam." So the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) said, "O Allah, guide Umm Hurairah." Then I ran out to give her the good news about the Messenger of Allah's invocation to Allah. When I arrived at the door, I found it closed, and I heard the sound of water. She called, "Stay where you are, Abu Hurairah." Then she put on her shift and veil and she came out saying, "I bear witness that there is no god but Allah and that Muhammad is His slave and Messenger." So I hurried to the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) crying out for joy as I had cried for sadness and I said, "Here is good news, O Messenger of Allah. Allah has answered your invocation. Allah has guided Umm Hurairah to Islam." I added, "O Messenger of Allah, invoke Allah to make all the believers love me and my mother." He said, "O Allah, make every believer love this slave of Yours and his mother."

Abu Hurairah led the life of a worshiper and fighter. He did not miss a battle or a pious deed. During the caliphate of `Umar Ibn Al-Khattab (May Allah be pleased with him), he made him governor of Bahrain. `Umar, as we know, used to call his rulers sternly to account. If he made one of them governor when he had two garments, on the day he ceased to govern, he should still own no more than those two garments, and it would be better to leave office with only one ! But if he left office with any display of wealth, he would not escape `Umar's reckoning, even if the source of his fortune was halaal. It was another world that `Umar filled with wonders and miracles.

When Abu Hurairah was made governor of Bahrain, he saved some money from halaal sources. However, Umar knew and invited him to Al-Madiinah.

Let Abu Hurairah narrate the quick conversation that took place between them: `Umar said to me, "O the enemy of Allah and His Book, did you steal the money of Allah?" I said, "I am not the enemy of Allah or His Book. I am the enemy of their enemy. Besides, I am not the one who steals the money of Allah!" He said, "Then how did you gather 10,000?" I said, "I had a horse that had foaled repeatedly." `Umar said, "Put it (the money) in the Bait Al-Maal (the treasury)."

Abu Hurairah gave the money to `Umar and raised his hands towards the sky saying, "O Allah, forgive the Commander of the Faithful." After a while `Umar called Abu Hurairah and offered him the governorship again. However, he refused and apologized. `Umar asked why. Abu Hurairah said, "So that my honor would not be at stake, my money would not be taken, and my back would not be beaten." He added, "I'm afraid I would judge without knowledge or speak without patience."

One day, his yearning to meet Allah intensified. While his visitors were invoking Allah to cure him of his disease, he was imploring Allah saying, "O Allah, I love to meet You, so love to meet me." In A.H. 59, he died at the age of 78. His calm body was buried in a blessed place among the reverent inhabitants of Al-Baqi'

Returning from his funeral, the people kept reciting many of the traditions that he had taught them about the noble Messenger. One of the recent Muslims asked his friends, "Why was our deceased sheikh called Abu Hurairah?" His knowing friend answered, "In the pre Islamic time his name was `Abd Shams. When he embraced Islam, the Messenger called him `Abd Ar-Rahman. He used to be sympathetic towards animals. He had a cat that he used to feed, carry, clean, and shelter, and it used to accompany him as if it were his shadow. Thus, he was called Abu Hurairah, which means father of the small cat. May Allah be pleased with him."

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# Abu Ayyub Al-Ansari

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Scanned from: "Companions of The Prophet", Vol. 1, By: Abdul Wahid Hamid.

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Khalid ibn Zayd ibn Kulayb from the Banu Najjar was a great and close companion of the Prophet. He was known as Abu Ayyub (the father of Ayyub) and enjoyed a privilege which many of the Ansar in Madinah hoped they would have.

When the Prophet, peace and blessings of God be on him, reached Madinah after his hijrah from Makkah, he was greeted with great enthusiasm by the Ansar of Madinah. Their hearts went out to him and their eyes followed him with devotion and love. They wanted to give him the most generous reception anyone could be given.

The Prophet first stopped at Quba on the outskirts of Madinah and stayed there for some days. The first thing he did was to build a mosque which is described in the Qur'an as the "mosque built on the foundation of piety (taqwa)".  
(*Surah At-Tawbah 9: 108*).

The Prophet entered Madinah on his camel. The chieftains of the city stood along his path, each one wishing to have the honour of the Prophet alighting and staying at his house. One after the other stood in the camel's way entreating, "Stay with us, O Rasulallah."

"Leave the camel," the Prophet would say. "It is under command."

The camel continued walking, closely followed by the eyes and hearts of the people of Yathrib. When it went past a house, its owner would feel sad and dejected and hope would rise in the hearts of others still on the route.

The camel continued in this fashion with the people following it until it hesitated at an open space in front of the house of Abu Ayyub al-Ansari. But the Prophet, upon whom be peace, did not get down. After only a short while, the camel set off again, the Prophet leaving its reins loose. Before long, however, it turned round, retraced its steps and stopped on the same spot as before. Abu Ayyub's heart was filled with happiness. He went out to the Prophet and greeted him with great enthusiasm. He took the Prophet's baggage in his arms and felt as if he was carrying the most precious treasure in the world.

Abu Ayyub's house had two storeys. He emptied the upper floor of his and his family's possessions so that the Prophet could stay there. But the Prophet, peace be on him, preferred to stay on the lower floor.

Night came and the Prophet retired. Abu Ayyub went up to the upper floor. But when they had closed the door, Abu Ayyub turned to his wife and said:

"Woe to us! What have we done? The messenger of God is below and we are higher than he! Can we walk on top of the messenger of God? Do we come between him and the Revelation (Waky)? If so, we are doomed."

The couple became very worried not knowing what to do. They only got some peace of mind when they moved to the side of the building which did not fall directly above the Prophet. They were careful also only to walk on the outer parts of the floor and avoid the middle.

In the morning, Abu Ayyub said to the Prophet:

"By God, we did not sleep a wink last night, neither myself nor Umm Ayyub."

"Why not, Abu Ayyub?" asked the Prophet.

Abu Ayyub explained how terrible they felt being above while the Prophet was below them and how they might have interrupted the Revelation.

"Don't worry, Abu Ayyub," said the Prophet. "We prefer the lower floor because of the many people coming to visit us."

"We submitted to the Prophet's wishes," Abu Ayyub related, "until one cold night a jar of ours broke and the water spilled on the upper floor. Umm Ayyub and I stared at the water. We only had one piece of velvet which we used as a blanket. We used it to mop up the water out of fear that it would seep through to the Prophet. In the morning I went to him and said, 'I do not like to be above you,' and told him what had happened. He accepted my wish and we changed floors."

The Prophet stayed in Abu Ayyub's house for almost seven months until his mosque was completed on the open space where his camel had stopped. He moved to the rooms which were built around the mosque for himself and his family. He thus became a neighbour of Abu Ayyub. What a noble neighbour to have had!

Abu Ayyub continued to love the Prophet with all his heart and the Prophet also loved him dearly. There was no formality between them. The Prophet continued to regard Abu Ayyub's house as his own. The following anecdote tells a great deal about the relationship between them.

Abu Bakr, may God be pleased with him, once left his house in the burning heat of the midday sun and went to the mosque. Umar saw him and asked, "Abu Bakr, what has brought you out at this hour? Abu Bakr said he had left his house because he was terribly hungry and Umar said that he had left his house for the same reason. The Prophet came up to them and asked, "What has brought the two of you out at this hour?" They told him and he said, "By Him in Whose hands is my soul, only hunger has caused me to come out also. But come with me."

They went to the house of Abu Ayyub al-Ansari. His wife opened the door and said, "Welcome to the Prophet and whoever is with him."

"Where is Abu Ayyub?" asked the Prophet. Abu Ayyub, who was working in a nearby palm grove, heard the Prophet's voice and came hurriedly.

"Welcome to the Prophet and whoever is with him," he said and went on, "O Prophet of God, this is not the time that you usually come." (Abu Ayyub used to keep some food for the Prophet every day. When the Prophet did not come for it by a certain time, Abu Ayyub would give it to his family.) "You are right," the Prophet agreed.

Abu Ayyub went out and cut a cluster of dates in which there were ripe and half-ripe dates.

"I did not want you to cut this," said the Prophet. "Could you not have brought only the ripe dates?"

"O Rasulallah, please eat from both the ripe dates (rutb) and the half ripe (busr). I shall slaughter an animal for you also."

"If you are going to, then do not kill one that gives milk," cautioned the Prophet.

Abu Ayyub killed a young goat, cooked half and grilled the other half. He also asked his wife to bake, because she baked better, he said.

When the food was ready, it was placed before the Prophet and his two companions. The Prophet took a piece of meat and placed it in a loaf and said, "Abu Ayyub, take this to Fatimah. She has not tasted the like of this for days."

When they had eaten and were satisfied, the Prophet said reflectively:

"Bread and meat and busr and rutb!" Tears began to flow from his eyes as he continued:

"This is a bountiful blessing about which you will be asked on the Day of Judgment. If such comes your way, put your hands to it and say, 'Bismillah' (In the name of God) and when you have finished say, 'Al hamdu lillah alladhee huwa ashba'na wa an'ama a layna (Praise be to God Who has given us enough and Who has bestowed his bounty on us). This is best."

These are glimpses of Abu Ayyub's life during peace time. He also had a distinguished military career. Much of his time was spent as a warrior until it was said of him, "He did not stay away from any battle the Muslims fought from the time of the Prophet to the time of Mu'awiyah unless he;: was engaged at the same time in another."

The last campaign he took part in was the one prepared by Mu'awiyah and led by his son Yazid against Constantinople. Abu Ayyub at that time was a very old man, almost eighty years old. But that did not prevent him from joining the army and crossing the seas as a graze in the path of God. After only a short time engaged in the battle, Abu Ayyub fell ill and had to withdraw from fighting. Yazid came to him and asked:

"Do you need anything, Abu Ayyub?"

"Convey my salaams to the Muslim armies and say to them:

'Abu Ayyub urges you to penetrate deeply into the territory of the enemy as far as you can go, that you should carry him with you and that you should bury him under your feet at the walls of Constantinople.'" Then he breathed his last.

The Muslim army fulfilled the desire of the companion of the Messenger of God. They pushed back the enemy's forces in attack after attack until they reached the walls of Constantinople. There they buried him.

(The Muslims beseiged the city for four years but eventually had to withdraw after suffering heavy losses.)

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# Musab Ibn Umayr

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Musab ibn Umayr was born and grew up in the lap of affluence and luxury. His rich parents lavished a great deal of care and attention on him. He wore the most expensive clothes and the most stylish shoes of his time. Yemeni shoes were then considered to be very elegant and it was his privilege to have the very best of these.

As a youth he was admired by the Quraysh not only for his good looks and style but for his intelligence. His elegant bearing and keen mind endeared him to the Makkan nobility among whom he moved with ease. Although still young, he had the privilege of attending Quraysh meetings and gatherings. He was thus in a position to know the issues which concerned the Makkans and what their attitudes and strategies were.

Among Makkans there was a sudden outburst of excitement and concern as Muhammad, known as al-Amin (the Trustworthy), emerged saying that God had sent him as a bearer of good tidings and as a warner. He warned the Quraysh of terrible chastisement if they did not turn to the worship and obedience of God and he spoke of Divine rewards for the righteous. The whole of Makkah buzzed with talk of these claims. The vulnerable Quraysh leaders thought of ways of silencing Muhammad. When ridicule and persuasion did not work, they embarked on a campaign of harassment and persecution.

Musab learnt that Muhammad and those who believed in his message were gathering in a house near the hill of as-Safa to evade Quraysh harassment. This was the house of al-Arqam. To satisfy his curiosity, Musab proceeded to the house undererred by the know ledge of Quraysh hostility. There he met the Prophet teaching his small band of companions, reciting the verses of the Quran to them and performing Salat with them in submission to God, the Great, the Most High.

The Prophet welcomed him, and with his noble hand tenderly touched Musab's heart as it throbbed with excitement. A deep feeling of tranquility came over him.

Musab was totally overwhelmed by what he had seen and heard. The words of the Quran had made a deep and immediate impression on him.

In this first meeting with the Prophet, the young and decisive Musab declared his acceptance of Islam. It was a historic moment. The keen mind of Musab, his tenacious will and determination, his eloquence and his beautiful character were now in the service of Islam and would help change the course of men's destinies and of history.

On accepting Islam Musab had one major concern his mother. Her name was Khunnas bint Malik. She was a woman of extraordinary power. She had a dominant personality and could easily arouse fear and terror. When Musab became a Muslim, the only power on earth he might have feared was his mother. All the powerful nobles of Makkah and their attachment to pagan customs and traditions were of little consequence to him. Having his mother as an opponent, however, could not be taken lightly.

Musab thought quickly. He decided that he should conceal his acceptance of Islam until such time as a solution should come from God. He continued to frequent the House of al-Arqam and sit in the company of the Prophet. He felt serene in his new faith and by keeping all indications of his acceptance of Islam away from her, he managed to stave off his mother's wrath, but not for long.

It was difficult during those days to keep anything secret in Makkah for long. The eyes and ears of the Quraysh were on every road. Behind every footstep imprinted in the soft and burning sand was a Quraysh informer. Before long, Musab was seen as he quietly entered the House of al-Arqam, by someone called Uthman ibn Talhah.

At another time, Uthman saw Musab praying in the same manner as Muhammad prayed. The conclusion was obvious.

As winds in a storm, the devastating news of Musab's acceptance of Islam spread among the Quraysh and eventually reached his mother.

Musab stood before his mother, his clan and the Quraysh nobility who had all gathered to find out what he had done and what he had to say for himself.

With a certain humility and calm confidence, Musab acknowledged that he had become a Muslim and no doubt he explained his reasons for so doing. He then recited some verses of the Quran - verses which had cleansed the hearts of the believers and brought them back to the natural religion of God. Though only few in number, their hearts were now filled with wisdom, honor, justice and courage.

As Musab's mother listened to her son on whom she had lavished so much care and affection, she became increasingly incensed. She felt like silencing him with one terrible blow. But the hand which shot out like an arrow staggered and faltered before the light which radiated from Musab's serene face. Perhaps, it was her mother's love which restrained her from actually beating him, but still she felt she had to do something to avenge the gods which her son had forsaken. The solution she decided upon was far worse for Musab than a few blows could ever have been. She had Musab taken to a far corner of the house. There he was firmly bound and tethered. He had become a prisoner in his own home.

For a long time, Musab remained tied and confined under the watchful eyes of guards whom his mother had placed over him to prevent him from any further contact with Muhammad and his faith. Despite his ordeal, Musab did not waver. He must have had news of how other Muslims were being harassed and tortured by the idolators. For him, as for many other Muslims, life in Makkah was becoming more and more intolerable. Eventually he heard that a group of Muslims were preparing secretly to migrate to Abyssinia to seek refuge and relief. His immediate thoughts were how to escape from his prison and join them. At the first opportunity, when his mother and his warders were off-guard, he managed to slip away quietly. Then with utmost haste he joined the other refugees and before long they sailed together across the Red Sea to Africa.

Although the Muslims enjoyed peace and security in the land of the Negus, they longed to be in Makkah in the company of the noble Prophet. So when a report reached Abyssinia that the conditions of the Muslims in Makkah had improved, Musab was among the first to return to Makkah. The report was in fact false and Musab once again left for Abyssinia.

Whether he was in Makkah or Abyssinia, Musab remained strong in his new faith and his main concern was to make his life worthy of his Creator.

When Musab returned to Makkah again, his mother made a last attempt to gain control of him and threatened to have him tied up again and confined. Musab swore that if she were to do that, he would kill everyone who helped her. She knew very well that he would carry out this threat for she saw the iron determination he now had.

Separation was inevitable. When the moment came, it was sad for both mother and son but it revealed a strong Persistence in kufr on the part of the mother and an even greater persistence in iman on the part of the son. As she threw him out of her house and cut him off from all the material comforts she used to lavish on him, she said:

"Go to your own business. I am not prepared to be a mother to you." Musab went up close to her and said:

"Mother, I advise you sincerely. I am concerned about you. Do testify that there is no god but Allah and that Muhammad is His servant and His Messenger."

"I swear by the shooting stars, I shall not enter your religion even if my opinion is ridiculed and my mind becomes impotent," she insisted.

Musab thus left her home and the luxury and comforts he used to enjoy. The elegant, well-dressed youth would henceforth be seen only in the coarsest of attire. He now had more important concerns. He was determined to use his talents and energies in acquiring knowledge and in serving God and His Prophet.

One day, several years later, Musab came upon a gathering of Muslims sitting around the Prophet, may God bless him and grant him peace. They bowed their heads and lowered their gaze when they saw Musab, and some were even moved to tears. This was because his jalbab was old and in tatters and they were immediately taken back to the days before his acceptance of Islam when he was a model of sartorial elegance. The Prophet looked at Musab, smiled gracefully and said:

"I have seen this Musab with his parents in Makkah. They lavished care and attention on him and gave him all comforts. There was no Quraysh youth like him. Then he left all that seeking the pleasure of God and devoting himself to the service of His Prophet." The Prophet then went on to say:

"There will come a time when God will grant you victory over Persia and Byzantium. You would have one dress in the morning and another in the evening and you would eat out of one dish in the morning and another in the evening."

In other words, the Prophet predicted that the Muslims would become rich and powerful and that they would have material goods in plenty. The companions sitting around asked the Prophet:

"O Messenger of Allah, are we in a better situation in these times or would we be better off then?" He replied:

"You are rather better off now than you would be then. If you knew of the world what I know you would certainly not be so much concerned with it."

On another occasion, the Prophet talked in a similar vein to his companions and asked them how they would be if they could have one suit of clothes in the morning and another in the evening and even have enough material to put curtains in their houses just as the Kabah was fully covered. The companions replied that they would then be in a better situation because they would then have sufficient sustenance

and would be free for ibadah (worship). The Prophet however told them that they were indeed better off as they were.

After about ten years of inviting people to Islam, most of Makkah still remained hostile. The noble Prophet then went to Taif seeking new adherents to the faith. He was repulsed and chased out of the city. The future of Islam looked bleak.

It was just after this that the Prophet chose Musab to be his "ambassador" to Yathrib to teach a small group of believers who had come to pledge allegiance to Islam and prepare Madinah for the day of the great Hijrah.

Musab was chosen above companions who were older than he or were more closely related to the Prophet or who appeared to possess greater prestige. No doubt Musab was chosen for this task because of his noble character, his fine manners and his sharp intellect. His knowledge of the Quran and his ability to recite it beautifully and movingly was also an important consideration.

Musab understood his mission well. He knew that he was on a sacred mission. to invite people to God and the straight path of Islam and to prepare what was to be the territorial base for the young and struggling Muslim community.

He entered Madinah as a guest of Sad ibn Zurarah of the Khazraj tribe. Together they went to people, to their homes and their gatherings, telling them about the Prophet, explaining Islam to them and reciting the Quran. Through the grace of God, many accepted Islam. This was especially pleasing to Musab but profoundly alarming to many leaders of Yathribite society.

Once Musab and Sad were sitting near a well in an orchard of the Zafar clan. With them were a number of new Muslims and others who were interested in Islam. A powerful notable of the city, Usayd ibn Khudayr, came up brandishing a spear. He was livid with rage. Sad ibn Zararah saw him and told Musab:

"This is a chieftain of his people. May God place truth in his heart." "If he sits down, I will speak to him," replied Musab, displaying all the calm and tact of a great daiy.

The angry Usayd shouted abuse and threatened Musab and his host. "Why have you both come to us to corrupt the weak among us? Keep away from us if you want to stay alive." Musab smiled a warm and friendly smile and said to Usayd: "Won't you sit down and listen? If you are pleased and satisfied with our mission. accept it and if you dislike it we would stop telling you what you dislike and leave."

"That's reasonable," said Usayd and, sticking his spear in the ground, sat down. Musab was not compelling him to do anything. He was not denouncing him. He was merely inviting him to listen. If he was satisfied, well and good. If not, then Musab would leave his district and his clan without any fuss and go to another district.

Musab began telling him about Islam and recited the Quran to him. Even before Usayd spoke, it was clear from his face, now radiant and expectant, that faith had entered his heart. He said:

"How beautiful are these words and how true! What does a person do if he wants to enter this religion?"

"Have a bath, purify yourself and your clothes. Then utter the testimony of Truth (Shahadah), and perform Salat. Usayd left the gathering and was absent for only a short while. He returned and testified

that there is no god but Allah and that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah. He then prayed two rakats and said:

"After me, there is a man who if he follows you, everyone of his people will follow him. I shall send him to you now. He is 'Sad ibn Muadh."

Sad ibn Muadh came and listened to Musab. He was convinced and satisfied and declared his submission to God. He was followed by another important Yathribite, Sad ibn Ubadah. Before long, the people of Yathrib were all in a flurry, asking one another.

"If Usayd ibn Khudayr, Sad ibn Muadh and Sad ibn Ubadah have accepted the new religion, how can we not follow? Let's go to Musab and believe with him. They say that truth emanates from his lips."

The first ambassador of the Prophet, peace be on him, was thus supremely successful. The Prophet had chosen well. Men and women, the young and the old, the powerful and the weak accepted Islam at his hands. The course of Yathribite history had been changed forever. The way was being prepared for the great Hijrah. Yathrib was soon to become the center and the base for the Islamic state.

Less than a year after his arrival in Yathrib, Musab returned to Makkah. It was again in the season of pilgrimage. With him was a group of seventy-five Muslims from Madinah. Again at Aqabah, near Mina, they met the Prophet. There they solemnly undertook to defend the Prophet at all cost. Should they remain firm in their faith, their reward, said the Prophet, would be nothing less than Paradise. This second bayah or pledge which the Muslims of Yathrib made came to be called the Pledge of War.

From then on events moved swiftly. Shortly after the Pledge, the Prophet directed his persecuted followers to migrate to Yathrib where the new Muslims or Ansar (Helpers) had shown their willingness to give asylum and extend their protection to the afflicted Muslims. The first of the Prophet's companions to arrive in Madinah were Musab ibn Umayr and the blind Abdullah ibn Umm Maktum. Abdullah also recited the Quran beautifully and according to one of the Ansar, both Musab and Abdullah recited the Quran for the people of Yathrib.

Musab continued to play a major role in the building of the new community. The next momentous situation in which we meet him was during the great Battle of Badr. After the battle was over, the Quraysh prisoners of war were brought to the Prophet who assigned them to the custody of individual Muslims. "Treat them well," he instructed.

Among the prisoners was Abu Aziz ibn Umayr, the brother of Musab. Abu Aziz related what happened: "I was among a group of Ansar... Whenever they had lunch or dinner they would give me bread and dates to eat in obedience to the Prophet's instructions to them to treat us well.

"My brother, Musab ibn Umayr, passed by me and said to the man from the Ansar who was holding me prisoner:

"Tie him firmly... His mother is a woman of great wealth and maybe she would ransom him for you." Abu Aziz could not believe his ears. Astonished, he turned to Musab and asked: "My brother, is this your instruction concerning me?"

"He is my brother, not you," replied Musab thus affirming that in the battle between iman and kufr, the bonds of faith were stronger than the ties of kinship.

At the Battle of Uhud, the Prophet called upon Musab, now well-known as Musab al-Khayr (the Good), to carry the Muslim standard. At the beginning of the battle, the Muslims seemed to be gaining the upper hand. A group of Muslims then went against the orders of the Prophet and deserted their positions. The mushrikin forces rallied again and launched a counterattack. Their main objective, as they cut through the Muslim forces, was to get to the noble Prophet.

Musab realized the great danger facing the Prophet. He raised the standard high and shouted the takbir. With the standard in one hand and his sword in the other, he plunged into the Quraysh forces. The odds were against him. A Quraysh horseman moved in close and severed his right hand. Musab was heard to repeat the words:

"Muhammad is only a Messenger. Messengers have passed away before him," showing that however great his attachment was to the Prophet himself, his struggle above all was for the sake of God and for making His word supreme. His left hand was then severed also and as he held the standard between the stumps of his arms, to console himself he repeated: "Muhammad is only a Messenger of God. Messengers have passed away before him." Musab was then hit by a spear. He fell and the standard fell. The words he repeated, every time he was struck were later revealed to the Prophet and completed, and became part of the Quran.

After the battle, the Prophet and his companions went through the battlefield, bidding farewell to the martyrs. When they came to Musab's body, tears flowed. Khabbah related that they could not find any cloth with which to shroud Musab's body, except his own garment. When they covered his head with it, his legs showed and when his legs were covered, his head was exposed and the Prophet instructed:

"Place the garment over his head and cover his feet and legs with the leaves of the idhkhir (rue) plant."

The Prophet felt deep pain and sorrow at the number of his companions who were killed at the Battle of Uhud. These included his uncle Hamzah whose body was horribly mutilated. But it was over the body of Musab that the Prophet stood, with great emotion. He remembered Musab as he first saw him in Makkah, stylish and elegant, and then looked at the short burdah which was now the only garment he possessed and he recited the verse of the Quran:

"Among the believers are men who have been true to what they have pledged to God."

The Prophet then cast his tender eyes over the battle field on which lay the dead companions of Musab and said: "The Messenger of God testifies that you are martyrs in the sight of God on the day of Qiyamah."

Then turning to the living companions around him he said: "O People! Visit them, send peace on them for, by Him in whose hand is my soul, any Muslim who sends peace on them until the day of Qiyamah, they would return the salutation of peace."

As-salaamu alayka yaa Musab...

As-salaamu alaykum, ma'shar ash-shudhadaa.

As-salaamu alaykum wa rahmatullah wa barakatuhu.

Peace be on you, O Musab...

Peace be on you all, O martyrs. .

Peace be on you and the mercy and blessings of God.

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# Suhayb Ar-Rumi

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About twenty years before the start of the Prophet's mission, that is about the middle of the sixth century CE, an Arab named Sinan ibn Malik governed the city of al-Uballah on behalf of the Persian emperor. The city, which is now part of Basrah, lay on the banks of the Euphrates River. Sinan lived in a luxurious palace on the banks of the river. He had several children and was particularly fond of one of them who was then barely five years old. His name was Suhayb. He was blond and fair-complexioned. He was active and alert and gave much pleasure to his father.

One day Suhayb's mother took him and some members of her household to a village called ath-Thani for a picnic. What was to be a relaxing and enjoyable day turned out to be a terrifying experience that was to change the course of young Suhayb's life forever.

That day, the village of ath-Thani was attacked, by a raiding party of Byzantine soldiers. The guards accompanying the picnic party were overwhelmed and killed. All possessions were seized and a large number of persons were taken prisoner. Among these was Suhayb ibn Sinan.

Suhayb was taken to one of the slave markets of the Byzantine Empire, the capital of which was Constantinople, there to be sold. Thereafter he passed from the hands of one slave master to another. His fate was no different from thousands of other slaves who filled the houses, the palaces and castles of Byzantine rulers and aristocrats.

Suhayb spent his boyhood and his youth as a slave. For about twenty years he stayed in Byzantine lands. This gave him the opportunity to get a rare knowledge and understanding of Byzantine life and society. In the palaces of the aristocracy, he saw with his own eyes the injustices and the corruption of Byzantine life. He detested that society and later would say to himself:

"A society like this can only be purified by a deluge." Suhayb of course grew up speaking Greek, the language of the Byzantine Empire. He practically forgot Arabic. But he never forgot that he was a son of the desert. He longed for the day when he would be free again to join his people's folk. At the first opportunity Suhayb escaped from bondage and headed straight for Makkah which was a place of refuge or asylum. There people called him Suhayb "ar-Rumi" or "the Byzantine" because of his peculiarly heavy speech and his blond hair. He became the halif of one of the aristocrats of Makkah, Abdullah ibn Judan. He engaged in trade and prospered. In fact, he became quite rich.

One day he returned to Makkah from one of his trading journeys. He was told that Muhammad the son of Abdullah had begun calling people to believe in God alone, commanding them to be just and to do good works and prohibiting them from shameful and reprehensible deeds. He immediately enquired who Muhammad was and where he stayed. He was told.

"(He stays) in the house of al-Arqam ibn Abi al-Arqam. Be careful however that no Quraysh sees you. If they see you they would do (the most terrible things to you). You are a stranger here and there is no bond of asabiyyahi to protect you, neither have you any clan to help you."

Suhayb went cautiously to the house of al-Arqam. At the door he found Ammar ibn Yasir the young son

of a Yemeni father who was known to him. He hesitated for a moment then went up to Ammar and said:

"What do you want (here), Ammar?"

"Rather, what do you want here?" countered Ammar.

"I want to go to this man and hear directly from him what he is saying."

"I also want to do that." "Then let us enter together, ala barakatillah (with the blessings of God)."

Suhayb and Ammar entered and listened to what Muhammad was saying. They were both readily convinced of the truth of his message. The light of faith entered their hearts. At this meeting, they pledged fealty to the Prophet, declaring that there is no god but Allah and Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah. They spent the entire day in the company of the noble Prophet. At night, under cover of darkness, they left the house of al-Arqam, their hearts aglow with the light of faith and their faces beaming with happiness.

Then the familiar pattern of events followed. The idolatrous Quraysh learnt about Suhayb's acceptance of Islam and began harassing and persecuting him. Suhayb bore his share of the persecution in the same way as Bilal, Ammar and his mother Sumayyah, Khabbab and many others who professed Islam. The punishment was inhuman and severe but Suhayb bore it all with a patient and courageous heart because he knew that the path to Jannah is paved with thorns and difficulties. The teachings of the noble Prophet had instilled in him and other companions a rare strength and courage.

When the Prophet gave permission for his followers to migrate to Madinah, Suhayb resolved to go in the company of the Prophet and Abu Bakr. The Quraysh however found out about his intentions and foiled his plans. They placed guards over him to prevent him from leaving and taking with him the wealth, the gold and the silver, which he had acquired through trade.

After the departure of the Prophet and Abu Bakr, Suhayb continued to bide his time, waiting for an opportunity to join them. He remained unsuccessful. The eyes of his guards were ever alert and watchful. The only way out was to resort to a stratagem.

One cold night, Suhayb pretended he had some stomach problems and went out repeatedly as if responding to calls of nature. His captors said one to another:

"Don't worry. Al-La'at and al-Uzza are keeping him busy with his stomach."

They became relaxed and sleep got the better of them. Suhayb quietly slipped out as if he was going to the toilet. He armed himself, got ready a mount and headed in the direction of Madinah.

When his captors awoke, they realized with a start that Suhayb was gone. They got horses ready and set out in hot pursuit and eventually caught up with him. Seeing them approach, Suhayb clambered up a hill. Holding his bow and arrow at the ready, he shouted:

"Men of Quraysh! You know, by God, that I am one of the best archers and my aim is unerring. By God, if you come near me, with each arrow I have, I shall kill one of you. Then I shall strike with my sword."

A Quraysh spokesman responded: By God, we shall not let you escape from us with your life and money. You came to Makkah weak and poor and you have acquired what you have acquired.."

"What would you say if I leave you my wealth?" interrupted Suhayb. "Would you get out of my way?"

"Yes," they agreed.

Suhayb described the place in his house in Makkah where he had left the money, and they allowed him to go.

He set off as quickly as he could for Madinah cherishing the prospect of being with the Prophet and of having the freedom to worship God in peace. On his way to Madinah, whenever he felt tired, the thought of meeting the Prophet sustained him and he proceeded with increased determination. When Suhayb reached Quba, just outside Madinah where the Prophet himself alighted after his Hijrah, the Prophet saw him approaching. He was over-joyed and greeted Suhayb with beaming smiles.

"Your transaction has been fruitful, O Abu Yahya. Your transaction has been fruitful." He repeated this three times. Suhayb's face beamed with happiness as he said: "By God, no one has come before me to you, Messenger of God, and only Jibriil could have told you about this." Yes indeed! Suhayb's transaction was fruitful. Revelation from on high affirmed the truth of this:

"And there is a type of man who gives his life to earn the pleasure of God. And God is full of kindness to His servants."

*(The Quran, Surah al-Baqarah, 2:207).*

What is money and what is gold and what is the entire world so long as faith remains! The Prophet loved Suhayb a great deal. He was commended by the Prophet and described as preceding the Byzantines to Islam. In addition to his piety and sobriety, Suhayb was also light-hearted at times and had a good sense of humor. One day the Prophet saw him eating dates. He noticed that Suhayb had an infection in one eye. The Prophet said to him laughingly: "Do you eat ripe dates while you have an infection in one eye?"

"What's wrong?" replied Suhayb, "I am eating it with the other eye."

Suhayb was also known for his generosity. He used to give all his stipend from the public treasury *fi sabilillah*, to help the poor and those in distress. He was a good example of the Quranic verse: "He gives food for the love of God to the needy, the orphan and the captive." So generous was he that Umar once remarked:

"I have seen you giving out so much food that you appear to be too extravagant." Suhayb replied: "I have heard the Messenger of God say: 'The best of you is the one who gives out food.'"

Suhayb's piety and his standing among Muslims was so high that he was selected by Umar ibn al-Khattab to lead the Muslims in the period between his death and the choosing of his successor.

As he lay dying after he was stabbed by a Magian, Abu Lulu, while leading the Fajr Salat, Umar summoned six of the companions: Uthman, Ali, Talhah, Zubayr, Abdur Rahman ibn Awl, and Sad ibn Abi Waqqas. He did not appoint anyone of them as his successor, because if he had done so according to one report "there would have been for a short time two Khalifahs looking at each other". He instructed the six to consult among themselves and with the Muslims for three days and choose a successor, and then he said:

"Wa-l yusalli bi-n nas Suhayb - Let Suhayb lead the people in Salat."

In the period when there was no Khalifah, Suhayb was given the responsibility and the honor of leading the Salat and of being, in other words, the head of the Muslim community.

Suhayb's appointment by Umar showed how well people from a wide variety of backgrounds were integrated and honoured in the community of Islam. Once during the time of the Prophet, a hypocrite named Qays ibn Mutatiah tried to pour scorn and disgrace on sections of the community. Qays had come upon a study circle (halqah) in which were Salman al-Farsi, Suhayb ar-Rumi and Bilal al-Habashi, may God be pleased with them, and remarked:

"The Aws and the Khazraj have stood up in defence of this man (Muhammad). And what are these people doing with him?" Muadh was furious and informed the Prophet of what Qays had said. The Prophet was very angry. He entered the mosque and the Call to Prayer was given, for this was the method of summoning the Muslims for an important announcement. Then he stood up, praised and glorified God and said:

"Your Lord is One. Your ancestor is one. Your religion is one. Take heed. Arabism is not conferred on you through your mother or father. It is through the tongue (i.e. the language of Arabic), so whoever speaks Arabic, he is an Arab."

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## **Khadija Bint Khuwailid**

She was the best of womankind in her lifetime. She was the daughter of Khuwailid Ibn Asad Ibn `Abdu-l-Uzza Ibn Qusayy Ibn Kilab. She was from the tribe of Quraish and of Bani Asad and was called the chaste woman. She was born in a house of glory and leadership fifteen years before the Year of the Elephant and brought up in an honorable house. She was a rational and venerable woman. She was famous for her strictness, reason and decency. Because of this, she was respected and desired by the elite of her tribe.

She got married to Abu Halah Ibn Zararah of Tamimi-tribe and gave birth to Halah and Hind. After the death of Abu Halah, she married `Ateeq Ibn `A`iz Ibn `Abdullah who was from the tribe of Bani Makhzum. They stayed together for a period of time before separation.

Then, she refused many proposals of marriage made by venerable men. She devoted her life for her children and towards managing her trade. She was wealthy and used to hire men to manage her trade as partners.

Being informed of the Prophet Muhammad's truthfulness, integrity and good manners before his Messengership, she entrusted him to run her trade accompanied by her slave Maysarah in ash-Sham (Syria) and promised to pay to him more than to others. The Prophet agreed and travelled with Khadija's slave. He achieved great gains by Allah's willing. Khadija was quite pleased with his achievements. But what pleased and gained her admiration even more was Muhammad himself.

She started to think of him and found herself attracted to Muhammad emotionally. She had never felt such emotion before. But she started to wonder: Would he accept her proposal since she was forty years and he was only twenty-five? How could she face those whom she refused of the masters of Quraish before?

Meanwhile, her friend, Nafisa Bint Munabbih, entered and started to talk with her until she made her disclose what perplexed her. Then she comforted her and reminded her of his good character, lineage, wealth and grace over all those venerable men who sought to marry her.

No sooner did Nafisa leave Khadija than she (Nafisa) went to Muhammad. She intuitively asked him, "Why did you not marry, Muhammad?" He answered, "I cannot afford marriage." She smiled and said, "If there is anyone who could be eligible would you agree?" He asked, "Who is she?" She said instantly, "Khadija Bint Khuwailid." He said, "I would agree if she did."

Nafisa instantly went to Khadija to tell her the good news. On the other hand, Muhammad told his uncles about his wish to marry Khadija. Then, Abu Talib, Hamza and others went to Khadija's uncle, Amr Ibn Asad and betrothed his niece and offered him the dowry.

When marriage was concluded, many animals were slaughtered and distributed among the poor. They held the wedding party in Khadija's house. Halima as-Sa'diyyah who suckled Muhammad was among the audience. Khadija offered her forty sheep as a gift to the one who suckled her beloved husband, Muhammad.

When Khadija became Muhammad's wife, she set greatest examples in loving her husband and all what he desired. For example, she granted Zayd Ibn Haritha to Muhammad, when she felt that he loved him.

Likewise, she pleasantly accepted Ali Ibn Abu Talib as a member of her house due to Muhammad's wish. Allah showered incessant favors upon such happy union. He blessed them with boys and girls: al-Qasim, 'Abdullah, Zaynab, Ruqayyah, Umm Kulthum and Fatima.

Muhammed was inclined, as Allah willed, to worship in solitude. He kept on worshipping Allah in this manner in a cave on Mount Hira' for a month every year. He used to stay there for some days living on little provision away from the vain talk and the amusement of the people of Makka who worshipped idols.

Although Khadija could not endure to be away from Muhammad, she preferred to keep silent and not to ask him what he was doing there so as not to disturb him. She did her best in order to look after him and to let him live peacefully at home. When going to the cave, she kept watching him and then sent whosoever could guard him without disturbing him.

The Messenger of Allah kept doing that for a period of time. Then came Jibreel (peace be upon him) with Allah's blessing while Muhammad was in Hira' in Ramadan. Having received Allah's revelation, he went home scared, pale and trembling. He said, "cover me, cover me." After she knew what had happened, he said to her, "I am scared, Khadija" This rational wife replied, "May Allah look after us, Abul-Qasim, what good news, my cousin. So be steadfast. By Whom in Whose hand is Khadija's soul I think that you are the Prophet of this nation. By Allah, Allah will never make you lose. You keep good terms with your relatives, are truthful, help the weak, are a good host to your guests and help the afflicted."

Such encouragement comforted the Prophet's heart. She then went to her cousin Warqa Ibn Nawfal to tell him what had happened to Muhammad (pbuh). Accordingly, Waraqa proclaimed,

"Holy is He, Holy is He, by whom in whose hand is Waraqa's soul if you are truthful, Khadija, it is the great angel who came to Musa and `Isa. Surely, he is the Prophet of this nation. Would you tell him to be steadfast."

Afterwards, the wife went aforesaid to please her husband with the good tidings. Then, she brought him to her cousin, Waraqa to listen to him together. When Waraqa watched the Prophet approaching, he shouted, "By whom in whose hand is my soul, you are, the Prophet of this nation. You will be rejected, hurt, expelled, fought. Had I lived until such day, I would have supported you. Then he kissed his head."

Muhammad asked, "Would they expel me?" Waraqa replied, "Yes, None has claimed what you claim without being fought. I would like to live until such day." Then Waraqa died soon after.

The Prophet was pleased upon hearing Waraqa's prophecy. He realised what his mission to his people was to be and this was Allah's law concerning His Prophets and all callers to Him. Therefore, no matter how severe sufferings or persecution were he was ready to meet.

Khadija was the first to believe in Allah and His Messenger and to embrace Islam. This faithful and loving wife supported her husband, the Prophet (pbuh), and helped him endure the most severe kinds of torture and persecution. Then, she relieved him when he was hurt or rejected. When they called him a liar, she alone remained true. Then the Qur'anic verses were revealed:

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الْمُدَّثِّرُ ﴿١﴾ قُمْ فَأَنْذِرْ ﴿٢﴾ وَرَبِّكَ فَكْبِّرْ ﴿٣﴾ وَتَبَاكَ فَطَهِّرْ ﴿٤﴾ وَالرُّجْزَ  
فَاهْجُرْ ﴿٥﴾ وَلَا تَمَنَّ عَلَى مَن تَسْتَكْبِرُ ﴿٦﴾ وَلِرَبِّكَ فَاصْبِرْ ﴿٧﴾﴾

[المدثر: ١-٧]

*﴿O thou wrapped up (in a mantle)! Arise and deliver thy warning! And thy Lord do thou magnify! And the garments keep free from stain! And all abomination shun! Nor expect, in giving, any increase (for thyself)! But, for thy Lord's (cause) be patient and constant!﴾*

(Al-Muddathir: 1-7)

Henceforth, the noble, Prophet started a new life, full of blessings and hardships. He told his wife that the time of sleep and comfort was over. Khadija, then, began to summon people to Islam beside her husband. The first fruits of their work were her slave Zayd and her four daughters (may Allah be pleased with them all).

Afterwards, the Muslims suffered many different kinds of chastisement. But khadija was as steadfast as a mountain. She put before her eyes Allah's statement:

﴿الْمَ ﴿١﴾ أَحْسِبَ النَّاسُ أَنْ يُتْرَكُوا أَنْ يَقُولُوا ءَامَنَّا وَهُمْ لَا يُفْتَنُونَ ﴿٢﴾﴾

[العنكبوت: ١-٢]

*﴿Alif. Lam. Meem. Do men think that they will be left alone on saying, 'we believe', and that they will not be tested?﴾*

(Al-Ankabut: 1-2)

When Allah took the soul of her two young sons: al-Qasim and `Abdullah she kept patient. She also saw the first martyred woman in Islam (Sumayyah) when she suffered the deathly trials at the hands of the tyrants.

She bid farewell to her daughter, Ruqayyah when migrating to Abyssinia with her husband, Uthman ibn 'Affan, to escape the torture of Quraish and to preserve her belief.

She witnessed and lived in all hard times, full of hardships and struggle without being desperate. She, all the time, kept before her eyes Allah's saying:

﴿لَتَبْلُوكَ فِي أَمْوَالِكُمْ وَأَنْفُسِكُمْ وَلَتَسْمَعَنَّ مِنَ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا  
الْكِتَابَ مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ وَمِنَ الَّذِينَ أَشْرَكُوا أَذًى كَثِيراً وَإِنْ  
تَصَبَّرُوا وَتَتَّقُوا فَإِنَّ ذَلِكَ مِنْ عَزْمِ الْأُمُورِ﴾ (١٨٦)

[آل عمران: ١٨٦]

*Ye shall certainly be tried and tested in your possessions and in yourselves; and ye shall certainly hear much that will grieve you, from those who received the Book before you and from those who worship partners patiently, and guard against evil, then that indeed is a matter of great resolution.*

(Al-'Imran: 186)

Before all of this, she witnessed her truthful and kind husband suffering several types of trials while summoning to Allah. However, he kept patient seeking Allah's reward. The more trials, the more patience and steadfastness. He refused all luring offers when the bidders tried to entice him from the belief. Furthermore, he swore an oath in one such situation by saying:

*"By Allah, my uncle, had they put the sun on my right hand and the moon on left to leave this matter, I would not have left it until Allah disclosed His will or I die."*

Thus, this striving mistress, Khadija followed her husband, Allah's Messenger (pbuh) in belief and perseverance. When the people of

Quraish boycotted Muslims to besiege them politically, economically and socially, she stood by Muslims in Abu Talib's valley leaving her house to stay there for three years. The items of this boycott was written in a scripture and was hanged in Ka'ba. She patiently endured the sufferings of such siege with the Messenger and his followers. She gave all what she had in this trial though she was sixty-five.

Three years after the siege Abu Talib died followed by Khadija (may Allah be pleased with her), three years before Hijra (immigration to Madina). The Prophet suffered many afflictions after the death of Khadija who was his truthful minister.

The righteous soul went to her Lord after the end of her lifespan. She was really an excellent example in the field of the call to Allah and striving for His cause. She was a wise wife who gave all what she had to please Allah and His Messenger. Therefore, she deserved to be greeted by Allah and be informed that she would have a house in paradise. The Prophet (pbuh) said,

*"The best of women in it (Paradise) is Mariyam bint `Imaran. The best of women in it is Khadija bint Khuwailid."*

May Allah be pleased with Khadija bint Khuwailid, a chaste mistress, loyal wife, truthful and the striving believer in the cause of belief with all what she had of worldly benefits. May Allah give the best reward.

## `Aisha Bint Abu Bakr

She was a teacher of men, bint as-Siddiq, the Prophet's caliph, Abu Bakr `Abdullah Ib Abu Quhafah, Uthman Ibn `Amir of the Quraish, Makkan, Mother of the Faithful, and the wife of the noble Prophet (pbuh). She was the closest wife to the Prophet and the daughter of the closest man to him.<sup>1</sup> Her innocence was revealed from the top of the seven heavens.

She showed the world how the woman could be more knowledgeable than men, politician or warrior fourteen centuries ago. She was not a university graduate and did not study at the hands of orientalist or westernists.

Rather she apprenticed and graduated in the prophetic school, the school of faith and knights. From the tender years of her age the shiekh and the most pious of Muslims, her father Abu Bakr as-Sidiq brought her up. Then the Prophet (pbuh) the best and the most honorable creature look after her when she was a youth. Therefore, she aquired a great deal of knowledge that was transmitted over the centuries.

What she left of literature or legal opinions is now studied in many universities all over the world. Further her complete works could be points of study for any one who is interested in the Arab and Muslim history.

The Prophet (pbuh) married her according to Allah's command.<sup>2</sup> He (pbuh) betrothed her and Sawda at the same time but he married the latter who stayed with him for three years until he got married to `Aisha in Shawwal after the battle of Badr. The young bride, then, moved to the new house of the Prophet, which consisted of a room beside the mosque and was built of clay and palm-trees. The room was furnished with a mattress of palm-leaves beneath which there was nothing but a

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<sup>1</sup>Amr Ibn al-As related that he asked the Prophet (pbuh), "Who do you love most, O messenger of Allah? He replied "Aisha. "Who is from among men?"

<sup>2</sup>Aishah related that the Prophet (pbuh) said to me, "You were shown to me in a dream. An angel brought you to me, wrapped in a piece of silken cloth and said to me, "This is your wife." I removed the piece of colth from your face, and there you were. I said to myself, "If it from Allah, then it will surely be." [Reported by al-Bukhari and Muslim]

mat. As for the door it was just a curtain of hair. In such a modest room `Aisha started her marital life which became the speech of the world.

As a wife of the Prophet (pbuh), `Aisha adopted a great position. She became a model for all women anywhere and in any time she was an ideal wife. She relieved the Prophet's grief when suffering the hardships of life and the da`wah.

She endured poverty and hunger with the Prophet (pbuh). It is related that they spent two or three months without cooking. All what they feed on were just dates and water.

Once, when Muslims became luxurious, she was given one hundred thousand dirhams as a gift while she was fasting voluntarily. But she, at once, spent it in the cause of Allah. She was so poor that she had nothing to break her fast on. Thus, her maid asked her, "Would not you reserve a dirham in order to buy meat for breakfast?" She answered, had you reminded me, I would have done. She was a patient poor, and a modest wealthy woman. She did not adhere to this worldly life. Therefore, she thought that poverty and wealth were alike.

She was an ideal wife who was interested in learning from the Prophet (pbuh). Therefore, she became so knowledgeable that she was able to teach men and was a source of authorization and documentation in hadith transmission, and sacred law.

Az-Aubairi said, "If we compared `Aisha's knowledge to all women, `Aisha's would surpass them. Hisham Ibn Urwa said, I have never seen any one who could have knowledge of an ayah (a Qur'anic verse), an obligatory act, a Sunna act, poetry, history, lineage, judgement, or medicine better than `Aisha. I asked her, "What about medicine? How did you learn it, aunt?" She answered, "When I was sick, the Prophet prescribe (treatment) for me as did he when the people became ill. I also heard the people prescribing treatment to each other. Thereby I memorized such prescriptions.

Once, Masruq was asked, "Did `Aisha perfect the obligatory acts." He answered, "By Allah, I have seen the great prophetic companions asking her about the obligatory acts."

Yet, she (may Allah be pleased with her) was jealous. She was the most jealous wife of the Prophet (pbuh). This can be the nature of the

woman; to be jealous of other wives. But such jealousy had ever never led her to hurt any other wife.

Let us now turn to the most critical incident in `Aisha's life: the incident of ifk (the lie). On the return from the expedition of Banu Mustaliq there occurred what would hurt `Aisha and in turn the Prophet's honour. When the march was ordered, `Aisha was not in her tent, having gone to search for a valuable necklace she had dropped. As her litter was veiled, it was not noticed that she was not in it, until the army reached the next halt. Meanwhile finding the camp had gone. She sat down to rest, hoping that someone would come back to fetch her when her absence was noticed. It was night, and she fell a sleep. Next morning she was found by Safwan, a Muhajir. Who had been left behind the camp expressly to pick up anything inadvertently left behind. He put her on his camel and brought her, leading the camel on foot. This presented an occasion to the Prophet's enemies to raise a malicious scandal. The ringleader among them was the chief of Madina Hypocrites, Abullah Ibn Ubai.

`Aisha was in extreme pain and anguish for an entire month because of the slander that was spread about her. Her husband, the Prophet (pbuh) and her father were also placed in a most awkward predicament, considering their position and the great work in which they were engaged.

Eventually, Allah revealed some Qur'anic verses to free `Aisha's from such accusation. `Aisha was an ideal woman in suffering and afflictions. Therefore, she was a model for all women in both prosperity and adversity.

During the Prophet's illness, after returning from the farewell pilgrimage he felt that he was about to die. It is narrated that when the prophet was being carried to spend his nights with his wives in turns, he would ask, where should I go tomorrow? Where should I go tomorrow? (hoping to be `Ashah's turn). Then, the mothers of the faithful offered, pleasantly, their turns to `Aisha (may Allah be pleased with them all) to be treated where he liked. They said, O Messenger of Allah, we gave our turns to `Aisha.

The Prophet (pbuh), then moved to `Aisha's home who took care of him day and night. She would like to sacrifice herself for him as

saying "I sacrifice you with my father and mother, O Messenger of Allah." At the last moment of the Prophet's life, his head was placed on `Aisha's knees.

She said, "The Prophet (pbuh) died in the night of my usual turn at my house. Allah took him unto Him while his head was between my chest and my neck and his saliva was mixed with my saliva." At this moment, `Abudur-Rahan Ibn Abi Bakr entered holding a soft siwak (tooth stick). The prophet looked at the siwak. I thought that he wished to brush his teeth with it. I took the siwak, chewed and then perfumed it. Then I gave it to the prophet who in turn brushed his teeth very well. As he returned it back, his hand fell down. I began to supplicate Allah with a du`a often said by Jibreel and also by the prophet during his illness. However, the Prophet did not supplicate Allah with this du`a in this time. He then looked skyward and said (ar-Rafeeq al-`Ala) the heavens. Then he died. Praise be to Allah who mixed my saliva with his at the last moment of the Prophet's life.

The Prophet (pbuh) was buried where he died, in her home. She lived after him teaching men and women, and formulating the history of Islam until her death. She died on Tuesday night 17th of Ramadan, 57 AH she was sixty-six by then. May Allah have mercy and be pleased with her.

## Hafsa Bint `Umar

She was Hafsa bint `Umar Ibn al-Khattab. Allah supported Islam by means of her father `Umar. She was beautiful and pious woman. She got married to Khunis Ibn Hudhafa Ibn Qays as-Sahami who was from Quraish. He was a part of the two emigrations: to Abyssinia and to Madina. He fought in Badr and Uhud. In the latter battle he was fatally wounded and died shortly thereafter. Hafsa was eighteen years by then.

`Umar was depressed for his daughter's affliction who became a widow at such a young age. Whenever he went home and saw his sad daughter, he grieved. After a long period of thinking he decided to choose a husband for her to provide her with what she had lost of repose along six months, or more.

He first chose Abu Bakr, (may Allah be pleased with him) the dearest person to the Prophet (pbuh) `Umar, at once, went to Abu Bakr to offer him his daughter for marriage. `Umar thought that Abu Bakr would not refuse to marry a young pious woman who was the daughter of the man by whom Allah supported Islam. Having sympathetically listened to him, Abu Bakr did not respond.

`Umar went back with a broken heart and almost did not believe what had happened. He then went to Uthman Ibn Affan whose wife, Ruqayya, the daughter of the Prophet had recently died. Having offered him his daughter to marry, he apologized by saying, "I think I would not like to marry at the present time."

`Umar's gloom increased by Uthman's refusal, which followed Abu Bakr's. He became angry with his two intimate friends. Then, he went to the Prophet (pbuh) complaining about Abu Bakr and `Uthman. Thereupon, the Prophet (pbuh) smiled and said,

*"Hafsa will get married to someone who is better than Uthman and Uthman will get married to someone who is better than Hafsa."*

*(Reported by al-Bukhari)*

Accordingly `Umar was elated to receive such a great honour which he never thought about it. He went off to tell whomever he met. When Abu Bakr met him, he realized the source of his joy. Therefore, he congratulated him and apologized by saying, "Do not be angry with me, `Umar. The Prophet has mentioned Hafsa before and I could not disclose the Prophet's secret (pbuh). Had he left her, I would have married her."

All people in Madina was pleased with the Prophet's marriage to Hafsa bint `Umar. It was contracted in the month of Sha`ban in the third year of Hijra. They blessed the marriage of `Uthman to Umm Kulthum bint Muhammed (pbuh) in the month of Jumada al-Akhirah in the same year as well. Thus, Hafsa joined the rank of the Prophet's pure wives, mothers of the faithful who were, by then, Sawdah and `Aisha.

Among the other wives of the Prophet (pbuh), `Aisha was the most intimate and closest one to Hafsa. His father, once, said to her, "How would you be like `Aisha and how would your father be like hers?"

It is Hafsa and `Aisha who backed up each other against the Prophet (pbuh). Consequently Allah the Almighty said,

﴿إِنْ نُؤَبَّا إِلَى اللَّهِ فَقَدْ صَغَتْ قُلُوبُكُمَا وَإِنْ تَظَاهَرَا عَلَيْهِ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ هُوَ مَوْلَاهُ  
وَجِبْرِيلُ وَصَالِحُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَالْمَلَائِكَةُ بَعْدَ ذَلِكَ ظَهِيرٌ﴾ [التحریم: ٤]

*﴿If ye two turn in repentance to Allah, your hearts are indeed so inclined; but if ye back up each other against him, truly Allah is his protector and Gabriel﴾*

(At-Tahrim: 4)

It is narrated that the prophet (pbuh) divorced Hafsa once when she backed up against him. Then he took her back according to Jibreel's command:

*"Take Hafsa back; she fasts and prays in the night all the time."*

Hafsa realized the gravity of what she had done to her noble husband when she disclosed his secret. But after the Prophet forgave her, she lived in tranquility and repose again.

When the Prophet (pbuh) died and Abu Bakr (may Allah be pleased with him) succeeded him, it was Hafsa who was chosen to keep the first copy of the glorious Qur'an. She kept on worshipping Allah devoutly, fasting, praying and keeping the copy of the Muslim constitution, the immortal miracle and the source of legislation and belief.

When her father, the caliph of the Muslim felt that he was about to die after he was stabbed by Abu Lu'lu'a, the Zoroastrian in the month of Zul-Hijjah, 23 AH Hafsa was the guard of what he left of inheritance.

She (may Allah be pleased with her) died in Mu'awiyah ibn Abu Sufyan's era after she commended her brother Abdullah with what she had been commended by her father. May Allah be pleased with the guard of the Qur'an.

## **Safiyya Bint Huhayy**

She was Safiyya bint Huyay Ibn Akhtab ibn Sa`yah. She belonged to al-Lawi ibn Israel ibn Ishaq ibn Ibrahim (may peace be upon them all) she was also a descendent of the Prophet Harun. She was chaste, rational, beautiful, religious and of good family. She got married to Sallam ibn Abu Al-Huqaiq before Islam. Then she married Kinanah ibn Abu al-Huqaiq. Both of her husbands were Jewish poets. Kinanah was killed was in the battle of Khaybar and his wife, Safiyya was captured like all other Jewish women.

Bilal, the Prophet's Muezien led Safiyya and a cousin of hers and made them cross the scene of fighting in which there were many Jewish deaths. Safiyya kept patient and did not worry or cry. Unlike Safiyya, her cousin cried, slapped her cheeks and put earth over her head.

They were brought before the Prophet (pbuh). When the Prophet (pbuh) noticed the impatient state of Safiyya's cousin which was manifested in her torn dress, dusty face and cries, he said, "Take this devil away!" Then he came close to Safiyya and looked kindly to her. Then he said, "Did mercy forsake you Bilal to lead two women through the deaths of their men."

Then, the Prophet turned to Safiyya and covered her with his garment and kept her behind him. This was an indication that the Prophet (pbuh) chose her for himself. Muslims did not know, by then, whether the Prophet married her or adopted her as a slave girl? But after he veiled her, they realized that he married her.

In a prophetic hadith narrated by Anas (may Allah be pleased with him) that when the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) took Safiyya bint Huyah, he said to her, "Do you like me?" She said, "O Messenger of Allah when I was an atheist I wished that. Then how would I be after I had embraced Islam?"

After her waiting period had expired (to verify that she is not pregnant) the Prophet married her and made her dowry freeing her. The prophet (pbuh) waited for a period of time in Khaybar until they reposed, he took Safiyya behind him after she became familiar with the new position.

The Prophet encamped with his army six miles away from Khaybar. He wanted to sleep with her but she refused. Thereby, he became angry of her refusal.

The prophet (pbuh) went on walking towards Madina followed by his army. When he reached as-Sahba` (a place) he encamped there to have a rest. He noticed Safiyya ready for consummating the marriage. Then Umm Ana Ibn Malik (may Allah be pleased with her) came to comb, adorn and perfume her until she became so charming. Umm Sinan commented, "I never saw a bright woman like her." The wedding banquet was offered in which the people ate of Khayber food: dates, oil, milk, until they became satiated.

When the Prophet (pbuh) was alone with her, he was angry with due to her previous refusal. She (the bride) lovingly told him an amazing tidings. She said, "I saw in a dream when I got married to Kinanah ibn ar-Rabee` the moon falling upon my knee. When I got up I narrated the dream to Kinanah. He got angry and said, "Would you like the King of Hijaz, Muhammad?" Then He slapped my face. The trace of this punch was still in her face. The Prophet (pbuh) smiled and then asked, "Why did you refuse me at the first time?" She, at once, answered, "I feared the Jews who might be nearby" then the Prophet's face became bright and he consummated his marriage with her. She was seventeen by then.

*Narrated Anas (may Allah be pleased upon him), "The Prophet (pbuh) stayed for three days at a place between Khaybar and Madina, and there he consummated his marriage with Safiyya bint Huiyay. I invited the Muslims to a banquet, which included neither meat nor bread. The Prophet (pbuh) ordered for leather dining sheets to be spread and then the dates, dreiet yoghurt and butter were provided over it,*

*and that was the banquet (walima) of the Prophet (pbuh). The Muslims asked whether Safiyya would be considered as his wife or as a slave girl of what his right hand possessed. Then they said, "If the Prophet (pbuh) screens her from the the people, then she iss the Prophet's wife but if he does not screen her, then she is a slave girl." So when the Prophet (pbuh) proceeded he made a place for her (on the camel) behind him and screened her from people."*

[Reported by Bukhari]

Reaching Madina, the Prophet (pbuh) did not let her stay with his other wives. Rrather he preferd that she stay in the house of his companion, Harithah ibn an-Nu`man.

When the women in Madina knew her coming, they looked forward to seeing her. The Prophet (pbuh) noticed `Aisha hiding herself among the women in order to see her. Although she was veiled, the Prophet identified her, held her dress and asked her, "What did you see, O Shuqaira' (blond woman)?" She out of jealousy answered, "She is just a Jewish woman." The prophet (pbuh) replied, "Do not say that; she embraced Islam."

When Safiyya moved to the Prophet's house, the other Prophet's wives became jealous of her beauty. Therefore, they boasted over her about their Arabic origin while she was foreigner.

Once, she was informed that Hafsa said that she was a daughter of a Jew and that made her weep. When the prophet (pbuh) found her weeping, he asked, "Why do you weep?" She replied, "Hafsa said that I am the daughter of a Jew." Then the Prophet (pbuh) said, "You are the daughter of a Prophet, the niece of a Prophet and the wife of a Prophet. Thus, how could she boast over you?" Then, he said, "Fear Allah, Hafsa."

Such words pleased her. Whenever any one boasted herself over her, she often said: "Why, I am Muhammad's wife, Harun's daughter and Musa's niece."

It is related that she had a bondswoman during the caliphate of `Umar who went to him and said, "Safiyya loves Saturday and has connections with the Jews. Whereupon `Umar sent for her and investigated the case. She replied, "As for Saturday, I have not loved it since Allah gave me Friday in its place, and as for the Jews, I have kinfolk among them and maintain my family ties." When she asked her servant what made her do what that, she was told, "The Devil," to which Safiyya responded, "You may go now, you are free."

She died in Madianh in 50 AH - 670 AC during the caliphate of Mu`awyah. She was buried in Baqee' beside the other Mothers of the Believers (may Allah be pleased with them all)

## Maymuna

She was Maymuna bint al-Hurith ibn Hazan ibn Bujair, ibn al-Hazm, ibn Ruwaiba ibn `Abdullah, ibn Hilal, ibn `Amer, ibn Sa`sa`a al-Hilaliyya. She was a sister of Umm al-Fadl, Al-Abbas' wife, an aunt of Khalid ibn al-Walid and ibn Abbas (may Allah be pleased with them all). She was among the mistresses of Quraish who were famous of honour and nobility.

She first got married to Mas`ud ibn Amr ath-Thaqafi before Islam. Nevertheless, she frequently visited her sister, Umm al-Fadl; from her she learnt some teachings of Islam and the news of the Islamic victory in Badr and Uhud that affected her heart.

When the Muslims returned victorious after the battle of Khaybar, she was in her sister's house. She was so happy because of the victory. When she went home, she found her husband depressed and sad. They quarreled and then separated each other. She resorted to Al-Abbas' house.

When the Prophet (pbuh) and the Muslims came to stay in Makka for three days to perform their rites as stated in the Hdaybya truce, they entered Makka peacefully on the appointed day. Then they loudly chanted "labbayka allahumma labayk. Labbayka la shareeka lake labbyaka" (Ever at Your service, O Allah, ever at Your service. Ever at Your service. You have no partner, ever at Your service." All parts of Makka responded to this clamour and the land beneath the disbeliever's feet quivered. They resorted to mountains and hills so as not to see Muhammad and Muslims' returning to Makka strong. Some men and women of those who did not declare their faith publicly stayed in Makka believing that the day of victory was coming. Maymuna was among those who did not declare their faith. However she was not satisfied with her hidden belief. Therefore, she declared publicly that she embraced Islam. Furthermore, she wanted to declare her wish to join the Prophet's house. She talked to her sister Umm al-Fadl about her wish. In turn, her sister told her husband Al-Abbas and commissioned him to her marriage. Then Al-Abbas went at once to the Prophet (pbuh)

and offered him to marry Maymuna. The prophet (pbuh) accepted the proposal and gave her four hundred dirhams as dowry. In another version it was stated that, "it was Maymuna who gave herself to the Prophet (pbuh) to wed her. Thereupon Allah the Almighty revealed,

﴿يَتَأْتِيهَا النَّبِيُّ إِنَّا أَحْلَلْنَا لَكَ أَزْوَاجَ النَّبِيِّ ءَأْتَيْتَ أُجْرَهُنَّ وَمَا مَلَكَتْ  
يَمِينُكَ مِمَّا أَفَاءَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْكَ وَبَنَاتِ عَيْمِكَ وَبَنَاتِ عَمَّتِكَ وَبَنَاتِ خَالِكَ  
وَبَنَاتِ خَلَّتِكَ الَّتِي هَاجَرْنَ مَعَكَ وَامْرَأَةً مُؤْمِنَةً إِن وَهَبْتَ نَفْسَهَا لِلنَّبِيِّ إِن  
أَرَادَ النَّبِيُّ أَنْ يَسْتَنْكِحَهَا خَالِصَةً لَّكَ مِنْ دُونِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ قَدْ عَلِمْنَا مَا  
فَرَضْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ فِي أَزْوَاجِهِمْ وَمَا مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَانُهُمْ لِكَيْلَا يَكُونَ عَلَيْكَ  
حَرَجٌ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ غَفُورًا رَحِيمًا ﴿٥٠﴾﴾ [الأحزاب: ٥٠]

*﴿And any believing woman who gives herself to the Prophet if the Prophet wishes to wed her; this only for thee, and not for the believers (at large)﴾*

(Al-Ahzab: 50)

After the Prophet had stayed for three days as stated in the covenant of al-Hudaybiya, the people of Quraish asked him to leave. The prophet leniently asked, "Would you leave me to wed among you; and I would invite you to the wedding feast? But, they harshly replied, we do not need your food we just want you to leave."

The polytheists feared the Prophet's stay among them because they knew his great impact on hearts. For example, Maymuna not only embraced Islam but offered herself to the Prophet to marry her.

Accordingly, the Prophet (pbuh) gave permission to leave and did not complete his wedding to Maymuna. On reaching Saraf (a place) ten miles away from Makka, he slept with his bride for the first time in the month of Shawwal, in the seventh year of the Hijrah calendar.

When Maymuna arrived at Madina, she joined the pure prophetic house as an honourable woman and a Mother of the Believers. She

(may Allah be pleased with her) led a life of sincerity and obedience to her husband.

She lived after the Prophet's death for about fifty years, all of which are full of devotion, piety and loyalty to the Prophet's memory. Ibn `Ata' said, "When Maymuunah died, I went out with Ibn `Abbas who said, "Do not shake her and be tender with her she is your mother." `Aisha also said, when Maymuna died, "Oh, Maymuna passed away. By Allah, she was pious and kept good terms with her kinship ties. May Allah have mercy on her.

## Zaynab

She was born ten years before the Prophet's Messengership. She was the eldest child of Prophet from Khadija bint Khuwailid (may Allah be pleased with her). She was brought up in the Prophet's house under the patronage of the most honorable parents: Muhammad, the Prophet and Khadija the mistress of all women. Therefore, Zaynab became an example of good manners.

No sooner did Zaynab reach the age of puberty than she was betrothed by her cousin from the maternal side, Abu Al-As Ibn or-Rabee' who was an eminent master of the people of Quraish. From the paternal side Abu al-`As belonged to `Abd Manaf ibn Qusai, the Prophet's grandfather and from the maternal side he belonged to Khuwailid, Khadija's father.

Therefore, Abu al-As and Zaynab were well acquainted with each other. Both of them knew how descent the other was. They married and led a happy marital life. Then, she gave birth to two boys: Ali and Umamah.

Oneday when Abu al-As was traveling for trade, there happened the greatest event in the life of the humanity. Muhammad (pbuh) was sent as a Messenger to all world. Zaynab, at once, responded to the call of truth which was revealed upon her father and embraced Islam. Having returned from his journey, he knew that his wife had accepted the new faith unexpectedly, she failed to convince him to embrace the religion of truth.

He justified his refusal by saying, "By Allah, I trust in your father but I fear that they might circulate that I left my father's religion to please my wife."

Zaynab was shocked by the disbelief of her husband. She stayed in her husband's home alone. Her mother died and her father and sisters left to Madina.

Afterwards, in the battle of Badr Abu al-`As was taken as a prisoner of war. The Prophet (pbuh) recommended the Muslims to treat the prisoners kindly. Meanwhile, Zaynab sent some money and a necklace to ransom her husband. It was her wedding present from her mother. No sooner did the Prophet (pbuh) see this necklace than he remembered earnestly his loyal wife, Khadija.

Thereupon, after a long period of pause the Prophet (pbuh) said, "If you would like to release her prisoner and repay her money, you could do so." They all said, "Yes, Messenger of Allah." Then, the Prophet (pbuh) took a pledge from Abu al-`As to release Zaynab because Islam put a barrier between them."

Having returned to Makka, he was received by his wife with a great joy. But he was very sad. He told her that he came to bid farewell to her. Zaynab sadly asked, "Where and why are you going?" He replied, "You not me. I promised your father to return you to him, because Islam put a barrier between us and I never broke a promise."

Zaynab set out from Makka to Madina but some people from the Quraish tribe obstructed her. They terrified her until she fell off her camel while she was pregnant. She had a miscarriage. She went back to Makka under the shelter of Abu al-`As. When she recovered, he took her accompanied with his brother, Kinana ibn ar-Rabei` until he brought her to the Prophet (pbuh).

As years passed, Zaynab lived with her father in Madina hoping that Allah open the heart of Abu al-`As to Islam. After six years, Abu al-As knocked Zaynab's door. She did not believe her eyes when she found him at her door. She was about to approach him for greeting but she stopped suddenly to check his belief.

All of sudden, Abu al-`As said, I did not come to Madina as a warrior but as a merchant. Nevertheless, a squad belonging to your father obstructed us and robbed my caravan as spoil of war. But I managed to escape. I came to you seeking your intercession on the part of Muslims. Zaynab said, welcome my cousin, welcome father of Ali and Umama. She went forward to the Prophet (pbuh) after he

had performed the dawn prayer. She shouted, "O people, I patronize Abu al-`As Ibn ar-Rabie`."

Thereupon the Prophet (pbuh) went out and said, "O people did you hear what I heard?" They replied, "Yes, Messenger of Allah." Then, he said,

*"By Whom in Whose Hand is Muhammad's soul I had not known anything about that before I heard what you heard. Muslims are one party against others. They permit the patronage of any one of them, however lower. Thus, we patronize whoever she patronized."*

Then, the Messenger of Allah went to his daughter's home and said, "Be hospitable towards him but do not be alone with him since you are not lawful to him."

Zaynab asked her father (pbuh) to give Abu al-`As his property back. Accordingly, the Prophet (pbuh) went to his companions and said, "you know this man, whose property you took. I would like to give him back his property. But if you do not like to do that, it will be your booty given to you by Allah." Then, they all replied, "We would like to give it back, Messenger of Allah."

Afterwards, Abu al-`As bid farewell to Zanyab and set out for Makka. Having arrived there with his prosperous caravan, he began to give back what he had taken from people. Then, he stood and shouted, "O people of Quraish, is there any one who indebts me?" They replied, no, you are loyal and generous. Then, he said, "I testify that there is no god but Allah and Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah. By Allah, I was about to embrace Islam before that time, but I feared that you might say that he wanted to misappropriate our property. But when Allah helped me give it back to you I embraced Islam."

Accordingly, Abu al-`As went forward to Madina to join the Muslim community. There the Prophet (pbuh) returned Zaynab to him. The spouse met again and continued living in happiness and felicity under the shade of an unblemished belief.

A year later, Zaynab died affected by her fall from the previous year when she was about to emigrate for Madina but Quraish obstructed her. Abu al-As became so sad that he caused the people at her funeral to weep. Then came the Prophet (pbuh), her father to bid farewell to her. He said to the women, "Wash her thrice or five times and let the last wash be mixed with comphor and tell me when you finish." Having washed her, he prayed over her (my Allah have mercy on Zaynab, daughter of the Messenger of Allah).

## **Fatima az-Zahra'**

She was Fatima az-Zahra bint Muhammad (pbuh). She was the fourth daughter of the Prophet (pbuh). She was born to the Prophet (pbuh) and his wife (Khadija) five years before the Prophethood of her father i.e., eighteen years, before the Hijra. With Maryam (Isa's mother), Khadija, Asiyah (Pharoh's wife), Fatima was the purest and best of womenkind.

She (May Allah be pleased with her) was brought up in the Prophet's home. Thus, she acquired the good manners of her parents. When she was five years there happened a great change in her father's life, he was sent as a Messenger to all of mankind. She felt, in the very early years of her life, that she should shoulder burdens of the new faith with her father. She suffered a lot of hardships and troubles because of the atheists' tricks done to her father. Among the severe troubles that she faced was the siege in the valley of Abu Talib where she suffered the pain of hunger and thirst side by side with her father and Muslims.

No sooner did she get rid of such siege than she was afflicted by the death of her mother, Khadija (may Allah be pleased with her). However, she stood by her father, the noble Prophet to compensate him for the loss of her mother.

After the Prophet (pbuh) had decreed the mass migration, she and her sister, Umm Kulthum stayed at Makka until the Prophet sent a companion to bring them. She was eighteen years by then. Many great companions betrothed her, like Abu Bakr and `Umar but the Prophet (pbuh) kindly apologized. Then came Ali Ibn Abu Talib to betroth her. The Prophet (pbuh) gave her to Ali in marriage when she was eighteen years old. Ali had nothing to pay as dowry but a shield, which was the Prophet's gift to him.

Ali sold his shield to `Uthman in return for four hundred and seventy dirhams, in order to give the price as a dowry to the Prophet (pbuh). Then the Prophet paid the dowry to Bilal in order to buy some perfume and give the rest to Umm Salama to buy the bride's luggage.

Afterwards, the Prophet (pbuh) invited his companions and made the wedding banquet. After Isha' prayer, the Prophet went to the bride and her groom. He asked for water. Then he made ablution and poured the water upon them. He said,

*"O Allah, may you bless them, make blessing be upon them and bless their offspring."*

A year later, Fatima gave birth to the first grandson to the Prophet (pbuh), Al-Hasan Ibn `Ali in the third year after Hijra. The Prophet (pbuh) was pleased and uttered adhan (call to prayer) in his ear. He also chewed a date and rubbed the newborn mouth. He called him al-Hasan, shaved his hair and gave away in charity silver equal to the weight of the hair. A year later, Fatima gave birth to al-Hussain in the fourth year of Hijra. The Prophet (pbuh) was very, sentimentally, close to Al-Hasan and his brother al-Hussain.

When Allah the Almighty revealed,

﴿وَقَرْنَ فِي بُيُوتِكُنَّ وَلَا تَبَرَّجْنَ تَبَرُّجَ الْجَاهِلِيَّةِ الْأُولَىٰ وَأَقِمْنَ الصَّلَاةَ  
وَأَتِينَ الزَّكَاةَ وَأَطِعْنَ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ إِنَّمَا يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ لِيُذْهِبَ عَنْكُمُ  
الرِّجْسَ أَهْلَ الْبَيْتِ وَيُطَهِّرَكُمْ تَطْهِيرًا﴾ [الأحزاب: ٣٣]

*﴿And Allah only wishes to remove all abomination from your, ye Members of the Family, and to make you pure and spotless.﴾*

(al-Ahzab: 33)

Once, the Prophet (pbuh) was at Umm Salama home. He called Ali, Fatima, al-Hasan and al-Hussain and covered them with garment, saying,

*"O Allah! Those are my household. O Allah! May you remove all abomination from them and make them pure and spotless." He repeated it thrice. Then, he said, "O Allah! May You make Your*

*prayers and blessings be upon the household of Ibrahim You are praiseworthy and Glorious."*

In the fifth of Hijra, Fatima and `Ali were blessed by a girl whom the Prophet (pbuh), her grandfather, called Zaynab. Two years later, Fatima gave birth to a girl whom the Prophet also called Umm Kulthum.

Hence, Allah the Almighty blessed Fatima with extending the Prophet's (Pbuh) offspring. When the Prophet (pbuh) returned from a journey he used to pray two rak`ats in the mosque and then visit Fatima before his wives. `Aisha, the mother of the believers said,

*"I have never seen someone who is like the Prophet (pbuh) in speech than Fatima. He is used to kissing her when she comes and so does she." Once the Prophet expressed his love to her while he was on a minbar; he said, "Fatima is a part of me; whoever annoys her annoys me."*

And it was stated in another version that the Prophet (pbuh) said,

*"Fatima is a part of me, whatever annoys her annoys me and whatever harms her harms me."*

(Reported by al-Bukhari and Muslim)

However, the Prophet (pbuh) drew the attention of his beloved daughter and others to the necessity of righteous deeds. One day he called,

*"O people of Quraish buy yourselves. I could not benefit you in the part of Allah. O Fatima bint Muhammad ask me whatever you want of my Property, I could not benefit you on the part of Allah."*

In another version it stated,

*"O Fatima bint Muhammad save yourself from the Hell-fire. It is not in my power to cause you harm or to bring you benefit beyond Allah's will."*

(Reported by al-Bukhari)

Thawban related that the Prophet (pbuh), once, entered Fatima's home accompanied with me. She was wearing a necklace of gold. She said, this was Abul-Hassan's gift to me. Then, the Prophet (pbuh) said,

*"Fatima! Would you like it to be said: "This was Fatima bint Muhammad, having a necklace of fire?" He severely rebuked and blamed her. Then he left. Subsequently, Fatima sold the necklace and bought by its price a maid slave and freed her. When the Prophet (pbuh) knew what she had done, he said, "Praise be to Allah Who saved Fatima from Hell-fire."*

(Reported by an-Nasa'i)

More than that he threatened her if she committed a theft, he would cut off her hand as mentioned in the Hadith concerning the Makhzumi woman who committed a theft and whose people then had Usama Ibn Zayd intercede for her in the part of the Prophet (pbuh). Thereupon, the Prophet (pbuh) said,

*"By Allah had Fatima bint Muhammad committed a theft, I would have cut off her hand."*

(Reported by al-Bukhari and Muslim)

Furthermore, despite the Prophet's love of Fatima, he would prefer the poor and the needy to her. When Ali realized that Fatima got tired, he offered her to ask the Prophet (pbuh) a maid. She said I would do so by Allah's willing. When she approached the Prophet (pbuh), he welcomed her and asked, "Why did you come, my daughter? She replied, I just come to greet you. She was so shy that she could not ask him what she wanted. Then, she went again to the Prophet (pbuh) accompanied by Ali, Ali explained Fatima's problem before, the Prophet (pbuh). Thereupon the Prophet (pbuh) said,

*"No by Allah, I would not give you and leave aside the people of Suffa (some poor people) starving. But rather I would sell and then support them. Having gone back home, the Prophet (pbuh) visited them and asked, "Would you like something better than you wanted?" They replied, "yes". He said, "It*

*is a few words delivered by Jibreel: to glorify Allah (i.e., subhana Allah) ten times at the end of every prayer, to praise Allah (i.e. Alhamdu lillah) ten times and magnify Allah (i.e Allahu Akhar) ten times. When going to bed glorify Allah thirty three times, praise Him thirty-three and magnify Him thirty-three. That is better than a servant."*

Hence, Ali said, "By Allah I did not cease reciting them, since I knew them from the Prophet (pbuh). A man asked, "Even in the night of the battle of Saffayn?" Ali replied, "Even in the night of Saffayn.

Fatima (May Allah be pleased with her) passed many trials and hardships of life. She was afflicted by the death of her mother and her sisters, Ruqayyah, Zaynab and Umm Kulthum successively. She also endured the life of poverty and want patiently. However, she did not surrender to sadness or disappointment.

Moreover, after the Prophet (pbuh) had performed the Farewell pilgrimage and completed the tenets of Islam, he got sick. She went forward to visit him at `Aisha's home (may Allah be pleased with her).

He welcomed her and then whispered in her ears that she wept vehemently. Noticing her impatience, he (pbuh) whispered again in her ears that she laughed. Therefore `Aisha (May Allah be pleased with her) asked Fatima, "Why do you weep, although you are the only one to whom the Prophet whispered? Afterwards when the Prophet (pbuh) left she asked her, "What did the Prophet (pbuh) tell you?" Fatima replied, "I could not disclose the prophet's (pbuh) secret."

When the Prophet (pbuh) died. She (`Aisha) said, "Would you please tell me what the Prophet (pbuh) whispered to you? Fatima said, "Now I can." As for the first time he whispered to me, he (pbuh) said,

*"Jibreel used to reiterate the Glorious Qur`an with me once a year, but at that time he reiterated it twice. Thus I think that I am about to die. You should, therefore, fear Allah and patient. I am your best predecessor." Accordingly, I wept. But when*

*he noticed my impatience, he whispered, "Fatima, would you like to be the mistress of the women in paradise, and the first of my family to die after me?" then I smiled.*

As the Prophet's (pbuh) disease grew more serious and painful, Fatima grew furious and sad. During the death trials of the Prophet (pbuh), she said, "What a distress is engulfing my father? The Prophet (pbuh) said,

*"No distress would engulf your father anymore."*

When the Prophet (pbuh) died she said, "O father, you responded to Your Lord. O father, heaven is your haven. O father to Jibreel we, console you"

After the Prophet (pbuh) had been buried she addressed Anas, "O Anas, how could you willingly hurl the earth over the Messenger of Allah (pbuh)?" Then she wept and so did all Muslims. Meanwhile, they remembered Allah's sayings,

﴿وَمَا مُحَمَّدٌ إِلَّا رَسُولٌ قَدْ خَلَتْ مِنْ قَبْلِهِ الرُّسُلُ أَفَإِنْ مَاتَ أَوْ قُتِلَ  
أَنْقَلَبْتُمْ عَلَىٰ أَعْقَابِكُمْ وَمَنْ يَنْقَلِبْ عَلَىٰ عَقْبَيْهِ فَلَنْ يَضُرَّ اللَّهَ شَيْئًا  
وَسَيَجْزِي اللَّهُ الشَّاكِرِينَ﴾ [آل عمران: ١٤٤]

*﴿Muhammad is no more than a Messenger. Many were the Messengers that passed away before him.﴾*

(Al-Imran: 144)

﴿وَمَا جَعَلْنَا لِشَرِّهِ مِنْ قَبْلِكَ الْخُلْدَ أَفَإِنْ مِتَّ فَهُمُ الْخَالِدُونَ﴾ [الأنبياء: ٣٤]

*﴿We granted not to any man before thee permanent life (Here) if then thou shouldn't die, would they live permanently?﴾*

(Al-Anbia': 34)

Six months later, Fatima fell ill. Then she soon died to fulfill the Prophet's prophecy. She was twenty-seven by then. May Allah have mercy on her.

## Umm Kulthum

She (May Allah be pleased with her) was born shortly after Ruqayyah. Therefore, they were brought together like twins. When they became matured, they were betrothed to Abu Lahab's two sons: `Utbah and `Utaibah. But this marriage was not concluded by Allah's willing. Thus, Allah preserved them of living with the enemy of Allah and his wife.

Ruqayyah got soon married to `Uthman (may Allah be pleased with them both) and migrated together to Abyssinia. Umm Kulthum stayed home shouldering the burdens of life with her mother, Khadija and relieving her father's grieves because of the atheist's rejection.

Meanwhile, the people of Quraish decided to boycott Muslims and Banu Hashim as well. They suffered an economical and social siege in the valley of Abu Talib for three years. There, Umm Kulthum suffered a lot like all other Muslims. She endured the afflictions of the siege and the pains of hunger all the time side by side with her father and the whole Muslim community.

Meanwhile, she shouldered the responsibility of her family because of the sickness of her mother and she was the eldest of her sisters. Shortly after the end of that wrongful boycott, Khadija's disease grew fatal, and died. Umm Kulthum became responsible for the Prophet household affairs.

Later on, when the people of Quraish felt that all their tricks went in vain they decided to assassinate the Prophet (pbuh). Thereupon, the Prophet (pbuh) decreed mass immigration to Madina. He and Abu Bakr migrated together leaving his two daughters Umm Kulthum and Fatima in Makka. Having arrived at Madina, he sent Zayd Ibn Haritha to bring his daughters from Makka.

In Madina, Umm Kulthum led a life of happiness and victory after the Muslims had defeated Quraish. All of sudden, her sister, Ruqayyah, Uthman's wife died. Afterwards, she noticed that Uthman kept giving frequent visits to the Prophet (pbuh) seeking patience and consolation.

One day, `Umar Ibn al-Khattab (may Allah be pleased with him) came enraged with angry. He was annoyed of Abu Bakr and Uthman because they refused his offer of marrying his daughter Hafsa. The Prophet (pbuh) said to him,

*"Hafsa will get married to someone who is better than Uthman and Uthman will get married to someone who is better than Hafsa."*

(Reported by al-Bukhari)

Then, the Prophet (pbuh) gave `Uthman, Umm Kulthum in marriage. Thereby `Uthman was called (Zu-Nurayn) the possessor of the two lights because he married two daughters of the Prophet (pbuh).

Umm Kulthum lived in her husband's house for six years. She witnessed the great victories of the prophet (pbuh) and the Muslims. After the great conquest of Makka, she wanted to visit her mother's tomb there. But she died soon and was buried next to her sister Ruqayyah. May Allah have mercy on her.

## Hind Bint Utbah

She was Hind bint `Utbah ibn Rabie`a ibn `Abd Shams ibn `Abd Manaf. She was of good and rational character. Her son, Mu`awiyah ibn Abu Sufyan said about her, "She was greatly dangerous in the pre-Islamic period but was of good character in Islam".

She got married to Al-Fakiha ibn al-Mughira by whom she gave birth to Abban. She after separating from al-Fakiha, got married to Abu Sufyan ibn Harb.

In the battle of Badr, she was afflicted by the death of her father, 'Utbah, her brother, al-Walid and her uncle, Shayba. She grievously lamented them and wished for taking vengeance. Therefore, in the battle of Uhud, she accompanied the army of Quraish like many other women who were to encourage the warriors. The women in this battle were to hit drums and sing poems in order to encourage the army.

In this battle Hind committed a heinous crime which the history did not forget. She enticed her slave, Wahshi to assassinate Hamza who killed most of her family in the battle of Badr. Moreover, she after the death of Hamzah disfigured him and removed his liver to chew it. She could not swallow his liver; therefore she spat it out. Because of her hostile attitude towards Hamza in that day, she was called the 'livers' eater'.

Not until the Manifest Conquest of Muslims in Makka did Hind come to the moment of illumination. It was said that when Abu Sufyan embraced Islam and went back to Makka crying, "O people of Quraish, Muhammed launched towards you troops that you could not oppose. Whoever entered Abu Sufyan's house is at peace, and whoever stayed home or entered the Sacred Mosque is at peace too."

Hind did not like her husband's behavior and insulted him. In the second day of the conquest she asked her husband to lead her to the Prophet (pbuh) He said, "Oh, you did not like that yesterday" she said, "I have never seen good worshipping of Allah like what the Muslims did last night. They spent all the night praying, kneeling and prostrating." Abu Sufyan said, "You would better go to him with one of your kin." Therefore, she went with Uthman ibn Affan (may Allah be pleased with him.)

She stood veiled before the Prophet (pbuh) with some other women. She said, "O Messenger of Allah, praise be to Allah Who made the belief He chose manifest. I declare that I believe in Allah and His Messenger. Then, she disclosed her face and said, "I am Hind bint Utbah." The Prophet (pbuh) said, "Welcome" and began to take the pledge of fealty and faith from them. Hind said, "May we shake your hand?" The Prophet (puh) said.

*"I do not shake women's hands. What I say to a woman is valid to a hundred."*

[Reported by Malik in Mouatta']

She then joined the Muslim community and took part in the Islamic achievements. She accompanied her husband in the battle of Yarmuk and reported some prophetic hadiths. She (may Allah be pleased with her) died fourteen years after Hijrah. May Allah have mercy on her.